

**History of  
FIRST BAPTIST  
CHURCH  
High Point, North Carolina  
Vol. II  
1969-2001**

*The History of High Point's First Family*



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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction by Dr. Bill Slater . . . . .	1
History Summary . . . . .	3
Missions and Ministries . . . . .	11
Sunday School . . . . .	29
Music . . . . .	33
Women's Missionary Union . . . . .	41
Brotherhood/Baptist Men/Men's Fellowship . . .	45
Deacons . . . . .	46
Youth . . . . .	47
Recreation . . . . .	54
Library/Media Center . . . . .	56
Special Worship Opportunities . . . . .	57
Building and Grounds . . . . .	59
Ministers and Staff. . . . .	73
Our Members. . . . .	80
Religious Affiliations . . . . .	89
Faith Journey. . . . .	104
Summary . . . . .	107
Addendum . . . . .	115
Church Constitution . . . . .	117
Vietnamese Church Update . . . . .	119
Staff 1969 - Present . . . . .	120
The First Family Photos . . . . .	122



Clarence Jordan, the author of the *Cotton Patch Gospels*, translated Hebrews 11:1, "Now faith is the turning of dreams into deeds." The history of First Baptist Church is a long and storied one that ultimately is not just history, but is literally "His Story," the story of God's working through a people and purpose to bring forth remarkable achievements. The dreams of that small band of people that first gathered in Jamestown could not possibly have been so large as to imagine what has now transpired over the years.



*Dr. Bill Slater*

The First Baptist Church of High Point began out of a love for missions and has never wavered from "keeping the main thing the main thing on Main Street."

As you read through these pages, you will discover the difference one church can make when fully committed to the Lordship of Christ and the Sovereignty of God.

Looking back helps us understand better where we are going in the future. The need for a witness in downtown High Point has never been greater or more vital. At the dawn of a new millennium, may it be that all who come behind us find us faithful as we find ourselves standing on the shoulders of that great cloud of witnesses who have gone before us.

A very special word of appreciation should be expressed on behalf of our entire church family to Carol Brooks and Martha Clontz for their countless hours of research, documentation, and literary composition that has made this history book an invaluable resource for all who call First Baptist Church their family.

Dr. William A. Slater  
Senior Minister



## HISTORY SUMMARY

*"History of First Baptist Church 1825 - 1968"* was published in 1969 and covers 143 years. This second volume picks up the church's history in 1969 and includes the next three decades. Even the most extensive research will always fail to bring some events to light, make minor errors, and fail to mention important members of the congregation. We apologize for any oversights we may have made in this history update. In addition, some events are mentioned here because they were omitted from volume one.

Following (in italics) is a synopsis of the first volume:

*Long before the founding of the city of High Point, people living in the area of Jamestown, North Carolina needed a place of their own to worship. They had been traveling about twenty miles round trip to Abbott's Creek Baptist Church in Davidson County and many had begun to tire of the trip. So, around 1800 they obtained permission from the mother church to start a "mission" in Jamestown called "an arm of Abbott's Creek Baptist Church."*

*This mission flourished and in 1824 the membership of around twenty-five voted to establish their own church. On September 3, 1825, the Jamestown Baptist Church was constituted, worshipping in a building we believe to have been across the street from the present Pizza Hut in "old" Jamestown on a now rerouted road. Elder Ashley Swain was called to be the first pastor. He concurrently held the same position at Abbott's Creek. This is the official start of the present First Baptist Church, High Point, North Carolina.*

*There was dissension within this new church, however, as there was in many Baptist churches of the time. Should it be mission oriented or not? A minority of the congregation was so firm in their belief that the church should contribute to missions that the large group who did not believe in missions, including the minister at the time, left the church in 1832. First Baptist Church of High Point is the result of those members who stayed and affirmed mission involvement. In 1832 the Jamestown Baptist Church became a charter member of the Liberty Association.*

*In 1859 the new city of High Point was being established along the path of the new North Carolina Railroad at its junction with the old Plank Road, the "highest point" between Goldsboro and Charlotte. Jamestown Church officials saw the potential for growth and development and the church moved to High Point in 1859, changing its name*

to the High Point Missionary Baptist Church. They chose property on Salem Street (the Plank Road, now Main Street) and the church has been on that site ever since. The name was changed to Salem Street Baptist Church for a while before becoming First Baptist Church, recognizing the fact that although we were the third church in the new city of High Point, we were the first Baptist church. The new High Point church had twenty-one members and no pastor but still had the faith to strike out on a new venture, just as the original members had in 1825.

The first church built in High Point at this site, a white frame building, was used as a hospital for a short time during the Civil War. There were only occasional services at the church during September 1864 - August 1866, during the War and there was no pastor. This first church building had no baptistry and baptisms were held "at the water," probably Deep River. The baptistry was built in 1881 but had to be filled by hand with buckets filled at a well three blocks away.

As early as 1870 the church listed colored members.

The Sunday School was organized in 1870 with John Pleasants as the first superintendent.

Around this time, each church in High Point had only one monthly service but there was a service at one of the area churches each Sunday with the same choir which rotated among the churches. Semi-monthly Sunday meetings began in 1887 and we began to meet each Sunday in the month during Dr. C. S. Farriss' tenure 1888-90.

The first women's group was organized in 1887 "to aid the pastor in every way possible and to help any needy in the community." It was called the Ladies' Aid Society. The first Women's Missionary Society is recorded in 1893, along with the Ladies' Aid Society. The first Women's Missionary Union was in 1896 and was responsible for all missionary groups, women and girls. WMU and LAS still met as well. The Ladies' Aid Society later merged with the WMU.

In 1897 we were still the only Baptist church in High Point. We decided to organize a mission on the "Free School Lot" in that year which later became the Southeast Baptist Mission. It was reorganized as Green Street Baptist Church in 1900.

The wooden church was replaced by our first brick sanctuary and Sunday School building in 1906. The wooden building stayed on the grounds for a while before being moved by mules to Thurston Street (now Westwood) to be used as a nurses' residence for the hospital.

The Extension Department (formerly the Home Department of the Sunday School) was organized in 1908 "to take the ministry of the



*Sunday School into the homes of people who were unable to attend the Sunday School on Sunday morning.”*

*We purchased a house on the corner of Lindsay and Jones (now Ferndale) Streets in 1919 to be used as a parsonage. It was sold in 1949 and we bought a house on Ferndale Drive. The parsonage was later located on Sherbrook Drive and today ministers purchase their own homes.*

*In 1926 Mrs. M. J. Wrenn started giving Bibles to fourth graders as they were promoted to the Junior Department. This practice continues today.*

*The WMU achieved the Standard of Excellence in 1922, 1924, and 1926.*

*The first Vacation Bible School was held for two weeks in 1927.*

*In 1931 we discussed building and moving the church to a lot we owned on West Farriss Avenue, but decided to remodel the existing building. Later that year we purchased a strip of land north of the church and a strip behind the church to be used as a driveway and parking lot.*

*The 100th Anniversary of the church was held October 30 and 31, 1932.*

*We added Sunday School classrooms behind the existing classroom area in 1935.*

*A Junior Board of Deacons was first elected in 1936 to supplement the Senior Board of Deacons.*

*The current sanctuary was dedicated in 1941.*

*Around 1944 the Men's Bible Class organized a Sunday School in the western part of the city. Green Street Baptist Church promoted the work and organized a mission which became West End Baptist Church.*

*In 1956 we organized a mission in the Five Points area of town which became College Heights Baptist Mission in 1963 and College Heights Baptist Church in 1965. Also in 1956, some members left First Baptist and organized what became Emerywood Baptist Church.*

*We joined the newly organized Central Baptist Association in 1958.*

*The Educational Building on the south side of the church was built in 1959.*

*During the Civil Rights and integration movements, Church documents state that in 1967 “a Negro couple” presented themselves for church membership. Since he had not met the couple before they came forward, Rev. James Pharr requested an opportunity to confer with them before the church voted on their membership. He was satisfied with their desire to join the church and the church voted to accept them into the fellowship. However, there are no records to show that they ever came back.*

*The church discussed the possibility of moving away from downtown at least one other time over the years but ultimately decided that our ministry was to the downtown area.*

As the 1970s drew near, members of First Baptist saw the need for different types of ministries to reach persons not yet included within the membership. Rev. James L. Pharr was pastor in this era, having accepted a call to the church in 1964. Under his leadership, in 1969 the educational ministry was organized into two divisions. The Preschool and Children's Division was led by Alma Bumgarner and the Youth and Adults Division was led by J. Clyde Hall, who was called from First Baptist Church, Carrboro, North Carolina. To allow for the expansion of the educational work, the church parlor and library were combined and new offices were provided for an Educational Minister and secretary.



*Alma  
Bumgarner*

Two new ministries were begun in 1970. The First Baptist Church Developmental Day Care Center was opened on January 1, 1970 for pre-school children. Nell Jacobs was hired as its first supervisor and succeeding directors included Martha Taylor, Rosemary Bennett, and Sammie Braxton.

While visiting Florida in 1970, Rev. Pharr observed that many churches sent buses out on Sunday mornings to pick up some members and potential members. He returned to High Point to suggest that First Baptist consider such a bus ministry. Eventually six buses were used in the ministry, each with a bus lay pastor, assistant lay pastor, and two teenage assistants making up each bus team.

(See chapter on Missions and Ministries for more information on the Day Care and Bus ministries.)

Strange as it may seem to us today, until the 1970s, many retail stores did not open on Sundays. They were closed under a series of "blue" laws which prohibited some businesses from opening on Sunday and regulated what could be sold in the businesses that were allowed to open. In 1972, Sunday School Superintendent Roy Burchfield urged members to vote their sentiments on a Sunday Blue Law referendum which was coming up soon in High Point.

One of the traditional parts of growing up in a Baptist church is Memory Work. Children learned the location of books of the Bible and

during “sword drills” would rush to be the first to find the verse that was called out.

Helen Sheffield took over direction of the Children’s Bible Drill, formerly known as Memory Work, in 1972. In a paper delivered to a church business meeting, Mrs. Sheffield noted that she and others could find almost no reference to this ministry in the church minutes. She added that she and her workers felt that perhaps only the parents of children in Memory Work and the workers themselves knew much about the history of this worthwhile training that was offered to boys and girls in the fourth through sixth grades.

“Memory Work began as a part of the Church Training Union Program. Sometime before



*Memory Work in 1960s*

1960, Mrs. H. A. Knight, Sr. worked with this program in First Baptist Church. Children were guided in the memorizing of some 50 Bible verses.

“A member of the church, Mrs. Mabel Hightower, became interested and involved in 1961 and she was the guiding light of this program until her death in 1972. The time that she devoted to Memory Work is impossible to count and the lives of the children she influenced will forever remain an honor to her memory. In 1972, just before her death, she asked me to be sure that Memory Work did not die in First Baptist Church because it was so very important for children to ‘hide God’s Word in their hearts.’ During the last three years in the Children’s Division of the Bible Drill, a child could learn a total of 108 Bible verses and 10 Key Passages - 36 verses and 10 Key Passages a year. Three tournaments allowed the child to advance from the local church to the association and the state, where winners would compete at the Baptist Assembly at Caswell.”

A pewter vase, in memory of Mrs. Hightower, was presented to First Baptist. It had been a gift to Mrs. Hightower from children who had competed in Memory Work during the decade she guided the program at First Baptist.

In 1977, the State Bible Drill Tournament was held in Asheboro with 13 winners from First Baptist. Participants that year were Sophia Owen, Steve Miller, Audra Ingram, April Ingram, Darnell Ingram, Venitta Ingram, Greg Hammer, Paula Godfrey, Rick Godfrey, Glenn Godfrey, Amy Chastain, Jeff Edwards, Beverly Stapleton, Cris Carter, Todd Marion, and Jill Sheffield. Five of the group were three-year state winners.

Teenage workers assisting with the program that year were Brad Hammer, Sharon Owen, and Joy Sheffield. Adult workers were Bob and Donna Hammer, Betty Peace, and Bernie and Helen Sheffield.

In 1974 or 1975 the Long Range Planning committee was charged with exploring ways the church could be expected to grow in the next five to ten years.

The 150th Anniversary of the church was celebrated Sunday, April 27, 1975, culminating a year-long observance. Edward V. (Oakey) Mitchell, retired *High Point Enterprise* Managing Editor, researched and wrote several articles for the paper's Sunday edition, headlined "*First Baptist: 150 Years of Devotion.*" Dr. Theodore Floyd Adams, visiting professor of preaching at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, Wake Forest, spoke at the morning service. Invitations were extended to all former members of the church and other interested persons in the community to attend an afternoon birthday celebration in the Lower Auditorium of the church.

By 1975, First Baptist had been served by 47 pastors. The church membership was over 1,500 and Sunday morning Bible study class enrollment was over 1,100, with average attendance of 600. The annual budget was \$250,000 and an additional amount was added to each special offering throughout the anniversary period in remembrance of the church's 150 years.

The *Enterprise* noted that "Undoubtedly it would be difficult for the early forebearers of First Baptist, whose worship services included mostly preaching and baptizing, to recognize a contemporary (1975)



**FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH  
HIGH POINT, NORTH CAROLINA**



church today.... At First Baptist, as with any church of its size today, many tasks must be performed each Sunday for the church to function. Some 125 teachers conduct Bible study classes from preschool through adult ages. A nursery, with 20 workers, cared for infants through three years of age. At the 11 a.m. service, 20 men greeted worshippers and ushered.”

First Baptist was one of few churches in the city to retain a regular Sunday evening worship service and records showed that attendance had increased considerably at this hour in 1975. Sunday morning services were evangelical in nature, emphasizing messages for the unchurched. The evening services were directed more toward persons active in the church programs. We currently do not have regular Sunday night services although informal groups gather regularly.

In 1978 First Baptist ordained the first women deacons, Meta Best, and Betsy Moss, basing the selection on 1 Timothy 3:11...“Those who do well as deacons will be well rewarded both by respect from others and also by developing their own confidence and bold trust in the Lord.” (*The Living Bible*)

In April of 1979 First Baptist voted to purchase property north of its location at 405 North Main Street for \$800,000. The move was called



“a major real estate deal” by the *High Point Enterprise*. The property’s boundaries were North Main, Church, and Elm streets and would provide much needed parking for church members. For many years there were only 25 parking spaces at the rear of the church. Members were dependent upon finding vacant spaces on the street, although James N. Wright, owner of the adjacent property, had permitted members to park on the property when it was not being used for commercial parking.

*Expanding parking behind the church*

Many members can recall how difficult parking at the rear of the church was for some drivers who, after negotiating the narrow drive by the church, had to skillfully park at correct angles in order to avoid obstructing other cars.

The church had been interested in this adjacent property since the early 1950s and twice had bid on the land but was unsuccessful in purchasing the property as the owner, the City of High Point, had interest in the land being developed commercially. When Mr. Wright, years later, offered the land for sale, the church made the purchase, after requesting that at least two-thirds of the members approve the move. The lot was not paved at the time of the purchase, but this was done at a later date. First Baptist now has the largest parking area of any downtown church. Spaces are rented on a monthly basis to downtown workers. The property also included a building which had been rented to the Golden B Restaurant and Small Luxuries Jewelers but was transformed in 2002 into a new Youth Center for the church.

A column by *High Point Enterprise* Editor Holt McPherson noted at the time of the sale that the block on which the church was situated was historically significant not only because of the church. He noted that the parking lot site at the corner of Main and Church for many years was the location of the city's Chamber of Commerce "Bureau," long known as the largest such structure in the world. On the grounds was the public Tate Park with a fountain and a bandstand for open air concerts. In earlier years, there had been a large residence built by Charles G. Mann, a professor from Germany who was interested in the gold mining that was flourishing in the area in the late 1800s.

When the purchase was made, Dr. Al Miller reported that some \$300,000 was in church funds and that a drive would be conducted to raise the additional funds. Records show that some funds came from a \$100,000 bequest from the estate of Jack Burris, in honor of his sister. Burris, although not a member of First Baptist, for many years was the neighbor of members Mr. and Mrs. Clarence Coggin who visited him often. Another bequest, from the D. A. Rawley family, lowered the parking lot debt. The parking lot was completely paid off in 1989.

Toward the end of the 1980s the church again began discussing moving from downtown into the suburbs, where a great number of the members were now living. In 1987 First Baptist Church had been in existence 162 years and had been at the same location in downtown High Point for 128 years. There were many things that still needed to be done as a ministry to downtown and the congregation felt that a Baptist presence was needed downtown. Therefore, the church committed itself to remaining a downtown church.



## MISSIONS AND MINISTRIES

*Celebrating our heritage of faith with a mission for tomorrow.*

Look through the records of First Baptist Church and one word will come up over and over again - **missions**.

In 1832, soon after the church was established as a branch of Abbott's Creek Baptist Church, there was a split in the church over missions. Some favored support of missions, a majority did not. Those who favored missions were strong people and the majority who opposed missions left the church. The current First Baptist Church is the result of

those members who stayed and supported missions. Therefore, the basis for First Baptist Church is mission work. We sponsored Alda Grayson as a missionary to China in 1928 and in 1977 we sponsored Dr. and Mrs. Gerald Keith Parker, missionaries in Switzerland.

So, it is fitting that over the years, First Baptist has taken a large role both in supporting mission work financially and in sending teams out to help those in need, whether abroad, in other parts of the U.S., or here in High Point. In fact, the church has both a Mission Committee and a Benevolence Committee. The Benevolence Committee provides clothing, toys, utensils, prescription purchases, food, transportation, payment of hospital bills, and hospital visits to those in need. The Missions Committee is responsible for the distribution of church funds for missions, initiating mission projects in the High Point area, and keeping the church aware of mission opportunities.

The most obvious sign of mission involvement is the part we had in the founding of four other churches in High Point, two of which have gone on to become thriving churches on their own: Green Street Baptist which celebrated its 100th Anniversary in 2000 and Emerywood Baptist which is over 40 years old.

Until 1990, First Baptist sponsored Troop 3 of the Boy Scouts and held the charter since 1924. This was the longest continuous charter in the city of High Point. A Cub Scout charter was awarded on February 28,



*A challenge upon leaving the parking lot*

1993 for Pack 3 which was organized by Rick Austin and Luis Gonzales as a part of the Old North State Council of the Boy Scouts of America.



*Radiant Club*

A group to offer senior citizens a special time to meet for recreation and fellowship was organized at First Baptist in the late 1960s. The purpose of the club was to offer older persons an opportunity to hear special programs, have meals, take trips, and share experiences together in their retirement years.

Called the "Radiant Club," the name described well the lives of many of its members who for years had served the church in many capacities and some who were still serving. Membership was not limited to church members, but also welcomed others in the community.

Minister of Music Bruce Hartgrove assumed the title of Director of the club soon after he joined the church staff, inheriting the title from his predecessor, Gerald Carter. In recalling the many trips taken by the club, Hartgrove said many non-members of the church often told him they joined the club because they knew they would meet compatible friends and appreciated the secure feeling when they traveled with such a church group. Trips taken by the club included the Pennsylvania Dutch country around Lancaster, Disney World in Florida, Vermont, and Myrtle Beach.

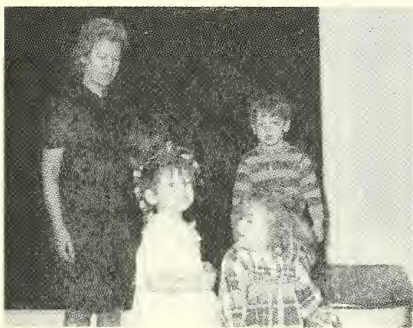
Membership through the years has fluctuated; in 2001 some 100 were listed as members, although attendance varied from 35 to 50 at most meetings. In 1977 Ruth Adams reported that the club "would like to

have at least 15 men in the club this year." A partial listing of members in the first years of the club include Roxie Workman, Mary and Ezra Reid, Lena Shields, Bea Nelson, Bessie Jones, Mary Annis Dickens, Mary Tinsley, Ann Ellis, Margaret Cook, Gladys and Homer Smith, and Hazel and Dennis Young. Among those who have served as president of the club are Mae Terry, Wanda Chastain, Bernie Sheffield, Faye Godfrey, Jack White, Marvin Slate, Meta Best, and Gladys Black.

Many of our Homebound members want desperately to still be a part of First Baptist but are not able to attend. In late 2001 we adopted Homebound members for special attention during the Christmas holidays. Each year church members enjoy caroling to homebound members.

A cassette tape ministry was started in the mid-1970s by the Thomas Sunday School Class taught by Dr. Walter Tice. Class members bought tape recorders for homebound members and then delivered taped copies of Sunday services. This is often the only contact with the church many members receive, the only chance they get to hear the sermons and choir and visit with the members who deliver the tapes. For a while the ministry was inactive but was revived in 1994 as a ministry of the Deacons who wanted to involve church members in more ministries to the homebound. Janet Gibson has been involved with the ministry since then along with many volunteers from the congregation. All ages have been invited to participate. They have delivered as many as 14 tapes a week.

In 1969 the church felt the need to offer day care for parents who work in the area and on January 1, 1970 the Developmental Day Care



*Molly McGowan and Day Care children*

Center at First Baptist opened and was licensed by the state in 1973. In 1974 it began to operate on a 9½ month school year, rather than year round. Directors and workers included Nell Jacobs, Sammie Braxton, Martha Taylor, Rosemary Bennett, Molly McGowan, Mrs. Robert Phillips, Susan Howard, Mrs. Joe Medlin, Evelyn Cox, Vera King, and Mrs. Howard

Brower. The enrollment soon grew to 25 children. Open space in front of the church's Educational Building was fenced and playground equipment was placed there in 1973. Cost per child was

\$14 per week, with care available for 11 hours each day. The Day Care Center closed November 31, 1976 due to low enrollment. In 1977 the playground equipment which had been used by the Center was given to Conrad Memorial Baptist Church.

In early 1971 several men, along with Rev. James Pharr, attended a meeting in Decatur, Georgia about establishing a Bus Ministry



*Day Care*

in the church. According to Calvin Miller, they learned that “two out of three people enrolled in Sunday School are won to Christ while only one out of 240 who are unchurched ever accept Christ. We can, through our Bus Ministry, bring large numbers of people into our church who otherwise would not be attending church.” In its planning stages, the *Church Herald* described a bus ministry as “the use of buses, by teams of Christian workers, who GO into communities and BRING unchurched people to church. It begins with children, and through them, to adults. If they want to come they will come. Christ said, ‘Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city and bring in - go out into the highways and hedges and compel them to come in that my house may be filled’ (Luke 14:21-23). Bus Ministry is 20th century application of this command.” We could expect a true revival. Other churches had seen average Sunday attendance increase 2 to 3 times and many baptisms. A bus ministry “requires many willing and DEDICATED WORKERS, an enlargement of our heart and soul to love the unlovely, to go after them and to teach them the love of Christ. Last, but not least, PRAYER.”

Carlton Hooks, who owned a trailer park near his residence, soon began inviting residents in the park to visit First Baptist before a bus ministry was officially organized. One Sunday he brought 14 persons in the existing church bus.

The bus ministry began in 1971 with the one existing church bus, the old “Gray Goose.” Later the church was asked to vote on buying two more buses, with six buses eventually used in the ministry. Mr. Hooks



had located used school buses in Boston, Massachusetts, and went there to purchase the vehicles. A few days later, John and Randy Davis, Robert Eagle and his two sons, Nathan and John, Byron Godfrey, Jim and Betty Royal, R. V. Moss, Robert Hammer, Dallas Dolle, and Bernie Sheffield flew to Boston to drive the buses back to North Carolina. The return drive encountered no problems greater than a few flat tires, loss of one generator, and one young man inadvertently left at a rest stop. Two of the men spent their own funds to buy extra buses to sell to other churches in this area and to other organizations.



*Bus Ministry in 1971*

We started the Bus Ministry with the provision that no one, because of color or race, would be denied the privilege of riding on the bus if they so desired. When a recommendation was brought before the church that the bus ministry be open to all who chose to participate without regard to color or race, the recommendation passed with only one dissenting vote. After a few months of operation, a small breakfast was provided to the children on Sunday mornings and assistance was given to several families who needed help. Calvin Miller was the first director of the Bus Ministry and was succeeded by Bill Howard. Each bus was to have a driver, assistant driver, bus pastor, assistant bus pastor, and three young people.

The Bus Ministry continued after Rev. Pharr resigned in 1971 to assume a pastorate in Ocala, Florida and Dr. Alfred Miller accepted a call to First Baptist. Through the next six years, the Bus Ministry was a visible part of First Baptist in the city. A column in the *High Point Enterprise* in 1971 quoted Minister of Education Clyde Hall as saying, "There is no effort to proselyte members of other churches. If the persons we visit attend another church, we congratulate them, but if they

do not, we invite them to visit First Baptist the next day (Sunday).” Emphasis was placed on inviting children to Sunday School and to the children’s church. The ministry brought persons from every socio-economic level and ethnic group. At the height of the ministry, an average of 200 were coming to First Baptist through this ministry. Also, a number of First Baptist members went in their own cars on Wednesdays to bring children and adults to evening events.

We are proud that one young boy who was one of the earliest participants in the Bus Ministry, Tony Griffey, has gone on to become a star tenor in the Metropolitan Opera in New York City.

A children’s worship hour was established for 1st through 3rd graders and 4th through 6th graders during the regular adult worship hour. So many children were coming in through the Bus Ministry and the adult volunteers were so overwhelmed that more volunteers were sought.

Since the church only had parking space for about 25 cars behind the church, Jim Wright, owner of the property adjacent to the church on the north side (the current parking lot), gave the church 10 parking spaces for the buses. A letter from the church thanked him for his many kindnesses.

An example of the many personnel involved in making the bus ministry a success is the 1977 list of workers which included Director Robert Culler, Associate Director/Bus Maintenance Calvin Miller, Traffic Director Henry Hodgin, and Bus Team Members and Assistants Robert Eagle, Darrell Bowers, John Eagle, Al and Sandra Miller, Terry Lowery, Garland Ledford, Donna Miller, Jim Royal, George and Peggy Gillie, Bill Morrow, David Lowery, Marvin and Linda Autry, Frank Autry, Tammy Maness, Ray Chambers, Phil Peace, Susan Stewart, Sam Best, Inman Chastain, Danny Tudor, Debbie Adams, Melissa King, and Teena Marion. Substitute drivers were Robert Hammer, Woody Chastain, Byron Boggs, Clarence Coggin, and Bill Logan. During the years of the Bus Ministry, many other members of the church faithfully assisted with the work but space, of course, does not allow every name to be included. This randomly selected list serves to show the number of persons involved each week.

The ministry continued for several years and brought a large number of people, mostly children, into First Baptist, some of whom are still attending the church. By 1978 the Bus Ministry had become less a ministry than it was transportation. Three of the buses were sold in July of that year, leaving us with three buses. Dwindling usage and lack of dedicated and willing leadership teams caused the ministry to fold. In 1979 the Bus Committee sold the final bus.



A Day of Prayer was designated on November 8, 1971 for prisoners of war, disabled servicemen and their families, for the families of those who had lost their lives in the Vietnam War, and for the termination of the war.

Mobile Meals Inc. was organized by Church Women United and the National Council of Jewish Women in 1972 and continues today, providing “meals and nutritional services to vulnerable and chronically ill individuals of all ages,” according to the Mobile Meals website. It is 60% funded by the government with the remaining 40% coming from client donations and private contributions. Since 1972, many members of First Baptist have contributed their time as volunteers to deliver meals and to visit to those who are not able to get out or take care of themselves.

Dr. Al Miller traveled to Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe) in 1974 for preaching missions in several communities in the bush country and one week in Salisbury, Rhodesia. As a result, we later established a fund to educate Francis Durie, a young man from that country. Dr. Miller said, “First Baptist Church, High Point, and First Baptist Church, Travelers Rest, South Carolina, greatly assisted him financially at Gardner Webb (College). He finished Southeastern Seminary with a master’s degree and received another master’s degree from North Carolina Central in Durham.”

Mission teams made up of First Baptist Church members of all ages, including a large number of youth, have been to eight foreign countries (Canada, Brazil, Germany, Ukraine, South Africa, Jamaica, Russia, and Honduras), seven states (Pennsylvania, Tennessee, South Carolina, Georgia, Virginia, West Virginia, and Alaska), and five cities in North Carolina (Thomasville, Seagrove, Jamestown, Greenville, the North Carolina Baptist Assembly at Southport - Caswell and also in High Point). We have helped build a church and a school, repaired homes, held Vacation Bible School, worked at the site of a new International Baptist Seminary, provided food and clothing for victims of Hurricanes Floyd and Hugo and housing for Hurricane Mitch victims in the 1990s, and sent eyeglasses to the Ukraine.

“This is the best way to have faith in action,” Youth Minister Stan Vaughn said during the 1996 mission venture in High Point, according to an article in the *High Point Enterprise*.

Outside the entrance to the Recreation Ministries Center is a flagpole which always flies the Christian flag and whenever a group from First



*Flags show current mission sites*

Baptist Church is on a mission trip, the flag of the mission country is also flown during their stay to show our involvement.

In 1975 the Youth began a Puppet Ministry which became known as Corban Puppeteers. They performed both live and with a tape sound-



*Corban Puppets in 1979*

track at First Baptist, at other area churches, at Camp Caraway, and for handicapped children with the Parks and Recreation Department. Paul Haywood was one of the key members of the Puppeteers and he wrote many of the scripts. He said, "One of my goals was to show that puppets were not just for children but could portray the gospel to Adults as well." The name means "a gift given by God" and comes from Mark 7:11, "But ye say, If a man

shall say to his father or mother, It is Corban, that is to say, a gift, by whatsoever thou mightest be profited by me; he shall be free" (*Revised Standard Version*).

The ministry continued for several years.

It was open to any youth of the church and practice was on Wednesday nights. Puppets were made both professionally as well as hand made by Haywood. Some

members of the Corban Puppeteers were Joy

Sheffield, Brooks Godfrey, Stephen Miller, Melissa King, Darlene Langston, Paul Haywood, and adult supervisor Inman Chastain.

In March 1977 a Mission Action Group from Baptist Women began a program to teach students to read. Participants from First Baptist were Frances Quigley, Mickey Miller, and Barbara Culler.



*Corban Puppeteers in 1979, Paul Haywood, Melissa King, Debbie Langston, Inman Chastain, and a friend*

Minister of Music Gerald Carter began offering lunchtime concerts for three Wednesdays during Advent in 1979 as a ministry to downtown

workers, a mission project that continues today. The 20 minute concert featuring choirs, handbells, flutes, organ, or brass ensembles is followed by a soup and sandwich lunch, all timed so workers can be back in their offices in one hour. The concerts are well attended and office workers appreciate the holiday break at noon. Sylvia Carter Curl said: "It pleases me so much to hear about the overflow crowd this past year (2001). We hoped it would catch on."

Close to home, Central Baptist Associational Missionary J.D. Harrod hoped that the Association would be involved in ACTS (American Christian Television Station) in 1985. ACTS was a Southern Baptist Convention channel with preaching and music, established to counter-balance the non-Christian television programming currently being offered. The only cost for the Association was the purchase of a satellite dish at a cost of about \$12,000. First Baptist Church donated about \$3,000 and we were represented on the Board of Directors by Dr. Lamar King and David Perry. The channel lasted for only a short period. The dish was sold at a monetary loss and the money put into the Associational treasury.

First Baptist Church has been a supporter of Crisis Pregnancy (formerly Precious Life Ministries of the Greater Triad) since its inception in 1985. First Baptist Church members Corinne King and Wayne Perdue were on the organizing board and several members of First Baptist helped in the organization. Carole Pressley has been First Baptist Church's representative on the board for many years.

In 1986 we established a fund to which the church would contribute \$50 a month for each young person who is a member of the church or who grew up in First Baptist Church and attends a Southern Baptist Seminary as a full-time student.

As early as the summer of 1978 we began sponsoring two refugee families from Vietnam. In July 1990, a church began organizing and on September 9, 1990, a Vietnamese congregation began to meet Sunday afternoons in our church building with Pastor Hoa Vo conducting services in Vietnamese. Vo was pastor of a Vietnamese Mission in Greensboro that wanted to start a High Point Mission. Their mission statement was "to bring persons to Christ, to help them in learning and in understanding the Christian teachings, and to help them discover their gifts and use them for His glory."

The first two families that came to the mission were Linh Van Cao, his wife and five children, and Thi Van Vo, his wife and three children.

Both families had entered the United States as refugees from Communist Vietnam. By February 1993 the church had 60 members, had hired a Minister of Music, and had baptized seven that month alone. Many of the congregation are converted Buddhists. Some ten percent of the original mission were among the "boat people" who were forced to flee Vietnam in open boats to eventually reach refugee camps in the Philippines or other countries. Some 60 percent came to the United States under the Orderly Departure Program of the U.S. Government which provided that persons who had aided the American forces during the Vietnam War could become American citizens. The other 30 percent are Amerasian who came to the United States as a result of one parent being American.

An article in the *High Point Enterprise* April 25, 1993 noted that the mission at First Baptist Church was the fastest growing of three Vietnamese congregations in the state. They moved their services to Sunday morning in 1992 and began ordaining Deacons also that year. In 1994 a couple in the church bequeathed a sum to missions in the North Carolina Baptist State Convention Board, with \$10,000 of that money designated to our Vietnamese Church.

In 1991 church members Hazel and Dennis Young donated a 1973 Dodge to two members of the Vietnamese congregation, Ut and Doung Nguyen, to be used as they attended the University of North Carolina - Greensboro in preparation for medical school. The Youngs were the first members of our church to work on behalf of the mission and continued their efforts until their deaths. (See Addendum, page 119.)

Current pastor is Vietnam native Rev. Paul Cao, a graduate of Campbell University and Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary in Wake Forest. Cao has been minister since 1991 and was a member of one of the first two families at the mission. He has served as president of the Vietnamese National Baptist Youth and as professor of Christian Education at the Vietnamese Theological Center which is an extension of Boyce Bible School (a division of the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary). He has also served as Reserve Chaplain at Pope Air Force Base and currently is coordinator for the Vietnamese Baptist Fellowship of North and South Carolina and chairman of the Vietnamese National Baptist Fellowship Committee 2001 which met in July at First Baptist Church. Over 1,000 people from all over the United States, France, Germany, and Australia attended the three day



Paul Cao



event. Rev. Cao is himself a refugee “boat person” and recognizes the hardships his congregation has had to go through.

Hieu Chi Le is associate pastor of the mission. He also assists with social services needed by his congregation and serves as a volunteer interpreter for High Point Regional Hospital. He is a graduate of Boyce Bible College in Louisville, Kentucky and was ordained here at First Baptist on November 27, 1992. In 1999 Le received a Good Samaritan Network award from World Relief for his efforts in assisting Vietnamese refugees.

Current membership of the Vietnamese Church is around 130 and they are raising money to build their own sanctuary. Land was acquired on Highway 62 partially through gifts from First Baptist Church members. First Baptist Church church minutes from 1994 state: “The Trustees recommend that First Baptist Church allow property purchased by the Vietnamese Congregation to be deeded to First Baptist Church without any financial obligation on the part of First Baptist Church” with the Vietnamese paying the taxes “and when the financial obligation for the deed has been satisfied and the Vietnamese Congregation become a church, First Baptist Church will turn the deed over to the Vietnamese Church.” However, as of 2001, the Vietnamese are totally responsible for their own property. Currently, both Rev. Cao and Rev. Le have offices in our church building.

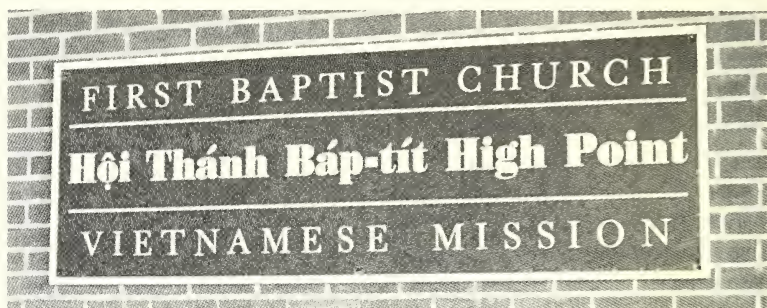


*Hieu Le*

In March 2001 the Vietnamese Church began sponsoring two new families from Communist countries. Our church was asked to help supply large and small household items.

Although the Vietnamese Church is not really a mission of First Baptist Church but a mission of its own, First Baptist Church continues to support the church, officially named *Hoi Thanh Bap-tit* in Vietnamese, and the two churches often join together for special services. They have introduced our members to some of their customs, native dress, and food, including delicious egg rolls. At a joint meeting of the two congregations on May 24, 1998, First Baptist Church minister Dr. Al Cadenhead preached as Rev. Cao translated into Vietnamese and both ministers officiated in baptism. The Vietnamese Choir sang “Amazing Grace” in Vietnamese and English and all expressed their gratitude for the support of First Baptist Church by presenting to First

Baptist a painting of the church building which was commissioned in Vietnam. Dr. Cadenhead and Hazel Young, a long-time supporter, were also recognized with gifts of a wooden clock in the shape of Vietnam. Rev. Cao also translated for Dr. Bill Slater in a joint Sunday morning service October 7, 2001.



*Vietnamese Mission sign outside entrance to First Baptist*

The Big A Club was organized in the 1990s to help the inner city children in the area. Each Saturday morning, church members such as Hazel Young, Janet Paine, and Helen Sheffield picked up children from neighborhoods around the church and brought them to the church for singing, Bible study, prayer, games, and other activities, along with healthy refreshments provided by different organizations in the church. The program was phased out several years ago but at its height, about a dozen children were participating Saturday from 9 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. The name Big A came from A representing the best, number one, a standard of excellence.

Our continuing support to State, Foreign, and Cooperative Baptist Fellowship missions rounds out our official monetary support but we are willing to give more at any moment. We regularly exceed our goals for every mission offering. We also support the North Carolina Baptist Retirement Homes.

In 1991, the Foreign Mission Board of the SBC decided, among other moves, to no longer fund the Baptist Seminary in Rüsclikon, Switzerland (now relocated to Prague, Czech Republic) which trained many European ministers. The SBC had contributed 45% of the total operating budget of the seminary. Many SBC churches, including First Baptist, did not approve of this action and motion was made and voted



on to revise our giving policy. The resolution was “that First Baptist Church send all undesignated gifts to the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering according to the recommendation of the Denominational Relations Committee (75% to Rüschlikon and 25% to all other foreign missions work) but that our people be permitted (and encouraged) to designate their offering in any way they choose.” Our church was regularly one of the top 20 churches in North Carolina in Cooperative Program giving up to this point. Along with this decision, we planned to increase support to North Carolina Baptist causes.

In March 1990 we stopped contributing to the Southern Baptist Convention operating budget but continued giving to the North Carolina Baptist State Convention Cooperative Program using “Plan C” which was adopted in 1994. Under this Plan, some of our money goes to the Baptist State Convention, some to the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship, and some to the Baptist colleges in North Carolina.

Since the Recreation Ministries Center opened in 1991, we have sponsored Basketball and Volleyball camps for children during the summers. The Recreation Ministries Building, which has become the main entrance to the church, was planned as a facility for recreation in a Christian environment. We rent the building to various groups to hold basketball leagues, sport camps, meetings, and until their recent move into their own facility, HeartStrides Health Rehabilitation. The reception desk originally was staffed by church members who volunteered their time.

Since the inception in 1991 of the High Point Jail Ministry, First Baptist Church has been blessed to be a large supporter of this non-profit, non-denominational, interracial outreach program. Jail Chaplain Rev. George Brice is a member of First Baptist Church. “The mission statement we’ve drawn up is that for every inmate who comes to High Point Jail who is willing to work to change his life, we’ll give him the resources to do so,” Brice said in an article in the *High Point Enterprise* in 1996.

The main purpose of the Ministry is to rehabilitate the inmates as well as to reduce the number who continue to be arrested multiple times. Up to 87% of the inmates are repeat offenders. The ministry provides Bible study, high school GED (General Education Development) programs (developed by church member Dixie Clapp in 1995), Alcoholics and Narcotics Anonymous support, job readiness programs, and self-esteem classes, as well as helping inmates with personal needs. Church members continue to volunteer for worship services at the jail and

support it monetarily. For several months an Ex-Inmate Support Group met in our church. "When we have one person change the direction of his life, it's an absolute miracle," Brice said. "But we do work in the area of miracles - we believe they happen." More than 1,600 inmates participated in the ministry's programs for more than 24,800 hours according to an article in the *High Point Enterprise* April 16, 2000.

The Koinonia Sunday School Class, of which George Brice is a teacher and member, organized benefit Barbershop Quartet concerts for the Jail Ministry for several years in the 1990s.

The Women's Missionary Union is a large part of the mission involvement of First Baptist. It encourages support of the Vietnamese congregation, the High Point Jail Ministry, Mobile Meals, Tape Ministry, Open Door Ministries, and Homebound. Over the years, its Nightingales singing group has included Ruth Adams, Wanda Chastain, Virginia Cox, Anne Currier, Minnie Davis, Jo Godfrey, Sally Hartgrove, Nell Hedrick, Bobbie Hodgin, Evelyn Welch, and Nancy Westmoreland. In 2001 the WMU collected canned corn for CTBA food baskets, deodorant for the North Carolina Women's Correctional Center, and on November 4 held a Bake Sale for Children of

Afghanistan during America's war on terrorism in that country.

In association with Habitat for Humanity, a Christian housing project, we have helped build homes and, through the annual Chicken Feed chicken dinner, first organized in 1996 by Jo

and Byron Godfrey, raised money for building supplies for Habitat. The play-on-words name "Chicken Feed" was conceived by Carol Brooks, both to announce the chicken meal and as a reminder that it only takes a little bit of help from us (chicken feed or scratch) to help others. Brooks also designed the logo. During recent spring breaks, several teams of college students from across the United States stayed at the church while working on Habitat Projects in the city.

In 1997 a preliminary Long Range Plan was presented to the church entitled "First Family Mission 2000." It contained six goals, one of which was Mission Support and Evangelism. Implementation was



assigned to the Mission Committee. That report read as follows:

*Goal - to increase the interest of our congregation in mission support.*

*Action Plans:*

- 1. Provide more opportunities for "hands on" mission efforts on both local and regional level.*
- 2. Provide better education of mission causes and awarenesses of existing mission opportunities of First Baptist Church.*
- 3. Adopt a missionary family.*
- 4. Study the feasibility of purchasing a house to be used as a missionary residence for people on leave or furlough.*
- 5. Expand missions projects on a local level.*
- 6. Provide a plan for followup of current church mission activities and a method of reporting back to the church for information purposes.*

In 1998 the Baptist Men met their goal of \$15,000 to help support the building of one unit of a 16 bed group house as part of the High Point Halfway House for the homeless, a joint effort of Open Door Ministries, Habitat for Humanity, and area churches. The house was needed because, according to the August 10, 1998 *Church Herald*, "it takes time to make lifestyle changes. Once a person has reached a certain point, a change in environment is necessary in the process of developing a sense of responsibility. In many cases, it is recommended that a move be made to transitional housing for six months to one year." The home is officially called the Arthur Cassell Memorial Transitional Housing Project. Our Baptist Men sponsored breakfasts, lunches, and golf tournaments to raise money.

After each communion service we collect an offering as we leave which goes to the Open Door Ministries homeless shelter, a practice begun in 1989. Open Door Ministries is a nonprofit organization that ministers to High Point's homeless, hungry, and destitute. Open Door Ministries is basically an extension of First Baptist Church. We support the ministry and when someone comes to the church seeking help, we refer them to Open Door Ministries rather than taking care of them ourselves. Prior to our support of the Open Door Ministries, the church served meals to transients who stopped by the church.

For several years, First Baptist has participated in the Souper Bowl of Caring on Super Bowl Sunday, a day when members bring cans of soup which are turned over to Open Door Ministries.

A Christ-centered health program, First Place, began on January 19, 1998,

meeting emotional, spiritual, physical, and mental needs. It focuses totally on the Lord, including Bible study, small group support, a commonsense nutrition plan, record keeping, weigh-ins, and other elements.

Inscribed on the old communion table are the words: *“And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, inasmuch as ye have done it unto the one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me”* (Matthew 25:40, King James Version).

Operation Inasmuch started in 1995 at Snyder Memorial Baptist Church in Fayetteville. Groups from that church went out into the community offering to help where needed. The project spread to many other churches in the state



*Operation Inasmuch 2000*

and First Baptist Church participated for the first time in 1999 and again in 2000 and 2001, heading up the project in the city each year. Many members and friends work around the city renovating, building, visiting the sick, feeding the hungry, collecting food for His Laboring Few Biker Ministry, giving sports clinics, auto maintenance, and sewing clinics, running errands for those in

need, cleaning homes, installing smoke detectors, donating snacks to the family waiting room at the hospital, offering the Lord's Supper to the homebound, visiting police and fire stations to offer thanks for their





*The minister's wife Kathy Slater gets her hands dirty during Operation Inasmuch 2000*

help, and many other projects—all in a one day mission “blitz.” “There is nothing but pure love out there that we really want to share,” 2000 chairman Ron Stroup said in an interview with an area newspaper.

Gladys Black and Byron Godfrey organized a “Cookie Brigade” in June 2000 to deliver home baked cookies to people who had moved into the



*Janet Paine and Ina Cobb, Operation Inasmuch 2000*

area. In the six months devoted to the project, beginning at 9:30 a.m. on the first and third Saturdays in the month, teams from First Baptist visited 234 homes and issued an invitation to visit the church. They made an extra effort during Operation Inasmuch in September 2000. Cookies made it easier for church members to make cold calls to strangers and gave them something to talk about as soon as the door was opened. The teams found that many of the families visited were already members of other churches. The seed for the Cookie Brigade was planted by Irma Duke of the North Carolina Baptist State Convention. Other First Baptist members who participated were Barbara Hunnicutt, Virginia Cox, Ron Stroup, Nancy Smith, Carole Pressley, Gladys Black, Jo and Byron Godfrey, Wayne and Faye Chambers, Leigh and Wanda Chastain, Janet and Ellen Paine, Gloria Pierce, Jean, Christina, Lorene, and Brittney Smith, Shari and Jerry Broyer, Pat Johnson, David Upton and the RAs, Karla Rodgers, Cindy Jarrell, Alisha Hunnicutt and the GAs, Shirley Smith, Adele Myers, Debbie Kelley, and Laura Morrow. As an extension of the Cookie Brigade in 2001, members were urged to adopt one of the prospects contacted in 2000 and invite them to church.

We give continued support to the Macedonia Christian Center in southeast High Point, the Triad Health Project, Salvation Army Transitional Housing Program, Love’s Bridge (a ministry to collect

medical supplies for Russian children), the World Relief Fund of the Foreign Mission Board for the famine in Africa and Bangladesh, and the World Hunger Auction.

We are a large supporter of Mills Home in Thomasville, part of the Baptist Children's Homes of North Carolina, an institution of the North Carolina Baptist Convention. Baptist Children's Homes (BCH) President Michael Blackwell is a member of First Baptist and is "astounded" that his church has been the number one church in giving in North Carolina for several years. Churches in North Carolina provide about one-fifth of BCH's operating revenue in the form of designated gifts, the Cooperative Program, and the Thanksgiving Offering. Church member Rick Smoot is an alumnus of Mills Home. In 2001, Ron Stroup was made a trustee of the Baptist Children's Homes.

For the past few years at Christmas, the church has participated in Operation Christmas Child (OCC) for Franklin Graham's Samaritan's Purse. At Christmas 2001 we collected 427 wrapped shoeboxes filled with toys, school supplies, toothbrushes, candy, and underwear for children in Nicaragua. Through OCC, needy children who are victims of war, poverty, disease, famine, and natural disasters around the world learn about Jesus through Christian literature supplied with the shoeboxes.

In March 2000, over 100 church members met to discuss what the church needed to do in all aspects of its life. Mission/ministry projects were a major concern that day and the result of that all day meeting was the Faith Journey project. Still in the planning stages, some of the ideas for direction were to have more contact with newcomers; consistent visitation to the homebound, new members, and prospective members; more active participation in missions and outreach; target specific groups for outreach such as singles; offer an alternative worship service; have church-sponsored business luncheons; and investigate offering after school and daycare programs. (For more details, see the chapter on Faith Journey.)

For many years the American Red Cross has held regular bloodmobiles at our church. The need for blood was never greater than after the terrorist attacks in New York City and on the Pentagon on September 11, 2001. The Red Cross held an emergency blood drive at First Baptist the afternoon of the attacks. About 155 units were taken, more than twice the anticipated amount. Even though the lines and the wait was long, hundreds of donors turned out to give blood and First Baptist volunteers helped in the organization, some not leaving until 4:00 a.m. the next morning. Youth Minister Ben Vogler, among others, helped comfort the crowd by organizing singing, activities, and prayer. The sanctuary was



open for prayer for several days for anyone who wished to come in and volunteers helped greet people. Dr. Slater summed up the response of the members of First Baptist Church best in the *Church Herald* of September 17, 2001. “A word of unbelievable praise is due our church. Last Tuesday, there was no greater beacon of light in all of High Point than what was happening inside our church doors. We opened our gym to the Red Cross Bloodmobile and literally hundreds of people came through our doors, many waiting three to five hours to do whatever they could for good. Newspaper and TV reporters said this was the center of compassion for the city and WE WERE CHURCH in every way that day.”

As you can see, the line between mission work and special ministries and needs is hard to see. Many times a good deed is just Christian duty, not mission work.

## SUNDAY SCHOOL

The first Sunday School probably was held in the 1780s in England. A drama written by the late Mrs. Jack Nofsinger, whose husband was a Baptist minister in Winston-Salem, traced the origins of Sunday School in early industrial England. According to Mrs. Nofsinger’s research, Robert Raikes is credited as being the “Father of the Modern Sunday School Movement” although there had been “sunday schools” before he gathered public support. He started a nondenominational Sunday class for the children who worked in a local factory so they could have an opportunity for “proper direction and guidance” (*A History of the York County Academy*, 1953). Since children worked during the week, they had no opportunity for proper schooling. Sunday was their day of rest. Classes were begun not by the clergy but by lay people. Church volunteers shared Bible stories and saw to it that the children were bathed and dressed in decent clothing (*The York Daily Record*, January 4, 2003). From England, the Sunday School philosophy moved to the United States.

Some scholars suggest that the impetus behind Sunday School was working class parents who wanted their children to learn “respectable” values in order to better themselves. Sunday Schools taught both religious training and literacy but also culture. Other scholars argue that Sunday School instruction has been directed by the middle class for the improvement of the working class. However Sunday School instruction evolved, the betterment of all economic levels has been accomplished.

A 1988 book published by Anne M. Boylan, a noted church historian, stated that "Sunday School in the latter part of the 20th century still remains the most important volunteer effort in the country today." She also stated that Sunday Schools have been the least researched and documented part of religious efforts in the United States.

Robert C. Stewart, Sunday School Director of the North Carolina Baptist State Convention in Raleigh reports that plans are underway in 2002 to commission a comprehensive study of Baptist Sunday Schools in North Carolina, going back to the beginning of the 20th century. He said that Baptist churches that are members of the State Convention are requested to submit an annual "profile" to their area associations. These reports will be studied for the history that has been commissioned and are expected to offer a comprehensive look at the activities and attendance of Baptist Sunday Schools of those years.

Sunday School at First Baptist in High Point unfortunately follows the pattern Ms. Boylan put forth as to being the least documented part of the church. Efforts to find records and stories relating to Sunday School for this history were hard to come by or unavailable. We grew up with Sunday School, as did our parents and children. Sunday School is such an integral part of First Baptist that we apparently felt no need to keep strict records of events throughout the years.

After Ben Vogler came to First Baptist as Minister of Youth and Recreation in 2001 he made a study which showed the attendance record for Sunday School from 1993 to 2002 averaged about 300. (Records for the two decades preceding this period which this history covers were unavailable at this writing.)

Older members of the church recall eras when attendance was much greater. These were years before the population of High Point expanded to outlying suburban residential developments where numerous new churches were organized. It was during this time that First Baptist made the decision to remain as a downtown church, in its original historic location, and not relocate to the suburbs where many of the congregation had moved.

Long-time members have personal recollections of special Sundays when attendance would be emphasized and figures would soar well above average. (We still have annual "high attendance" Sundays.) Other members commented on dramatic societal changes in the United States from the earlier decades of the 20th century when church and Sunday School attendance were prime events in most families' weekly activities. The decline of church and Sunday School attendance has been affected

by several factors—the repealing of “blue laws,” greater mobility (that is, transportation) giving families the possibility of weekend vacations, and the growing availability of other diversions.

The many personal stories of dedicated Sunday School teachers who served First Baptist through the years underscores the church’s commitment to offering spiritual and inspirational instruction to its members from their earliest to their most senior years. Sunday School classes also provided opportunities for creating deep and important personal friendships. One member recalled a period in the 1960s when new directives came down from the State Convention to have Sunday School classes adhere strictly to age classification. In the more Adult classes, numbers of members balked at this proposed change and a member recalled that some Adult members stayed where they were rather than move to another class. Today, although basic age guidelines are still in place, many Adult classes are composed of varying ages because the people who make up these classes feel comfortable and a kinship with these people.

One example of the dedication of some members made to Sunday School are the records of Irene Brooks and Cleo Cresimore. Some years ago both were recognized for more than 50 years of continuous teaching, Irene in the Beginner Department and Cleo in the Primary Department. Several other teachers were also recognized at that time. A. E. Tate served as Sunday School Superintendent from 1908 to 1939 and Woodroe Haywood served as Superintendent from 1952 to 1970. Records of church committees show that numerous persons who taught Sunday School have also served on various committees in the church.

Lawanna Mooney was Sunday School Secretary for many years.

Superintendents from 1970 to 2000 included Roy Burchfield, Garland Ledford, Suzanne King, Jerry Mallard, Bobbie Hodgins, Don Brock, Sid Grant, and Wayne Perdue. The title Sunday School Superintendent was changed to Director of Sunday School in the 1990s.

One of the stories which came to light when members were asked for personal recollections came from Julia Faye Metcalf, a friend of Mr. and Mrs. Nick Bambalis.

An interview with Bambalis revealed that, although he is not a member of First Baptist, he probably has one of the longest records for Sunday School perfect attendance.

Now in his eighties, Bambalis clearly recalls his many years attending Sunday School at First Baptist, from the time when a neighbor received permission from his parents to take him to the church

which was just a block away from his home on Elm Street.

"My father had emigrated from Greece and as there was no Greek church in High Point at that time, I'm sure my parents were glad for me to be taken to Sunday School," Bambalis said.

He could not recall the name of the woman who brought him to First Baptist. "She continued taking me to Sunday School until I was old enough to walk to the church by myself. When I was seven, my father and I went back to Greece for six months. My mother was so intent on my keeping up my perfect attendance record that while we were away, my father saw that I attended some type of Sunday School each week. He even went so far as to bring affidavits back to First Baptist to show that I had kept up my perfect attendance record during those six months."

He can recall the names of his Primary Department teachers, a Mrs. Shelton and a Mrs. White, who had a daughter named Georgia, the same age as Bambalis. He also remembers Meta Best who lived across the street from him and today is still an active member of the church.

"During the period between Sunday School and worship service, the boys would race to the yard at Elm Street School, behind the church [where the Youth Ministries Center is now located] and enjoy a quick game of ball."

Other teachers he recalls are Grover Furr in the Intermediate Department. Later, Bambalis was in Thomas Dodamead's Young Men's Class and continued in that group until 1941 when he married and went into service in World War II.

Bambalis still treasures the Sunday School perfect attendance pins he received for 23 consecutive years. Some years before he received the 23rd year award, the church had discontinued awarding the pins, Bambalis said. Fred Tate, whom he recalls as an officer of the Sunday School, continued ordering one for Bambalis each year.

Bambalis played brass instruments and said he frequently performed solos during morning worship services. After he returned from service, he joined the church where his wife was a member. "First Baptist probably was the most important influence in my life," he said. "Everyone welcomed me with affection and caring. My story may be unique and it certainly illustrates what churches can mean to young lives."



## MUSIC

First Baptist Church has been blessed to attract the highest quality music professionals to its staff over the years. Under their direction, the Music Ministry has grown to encompass handbells, vocal and instrumental ensembles, choirs for all ages, and special concerts and activities, far outdistancing the traditional Adult Choir found only on Sunday mornings in many other churches.

In May 1971, a reception was held for Cliff L. Christian, Jr., and his family. He had recently resigned his position as Music Director to go to Kilbourne Park Baptist Church in Columbia, South Carolina. Mr. Christian began the first handbell choir at First Baptist Church. Mr. Christian passed away a few years later of muscular dystrophy and a \$200 gift was sent to the South Carolina Chapter of Muscular Dystrophy in his memory. He served First Baptist six years as Minister of Music.



*Cliff Christian*

During this interim, former Minister of Music Jerry Jones and Dot Rountree served as music directors.



*Gerald and Sylvia Carter*

Gerald Carter joined First Baptist in 1973 as Minister of Music and his wife, Sylvia, came as Organist.

In 1975, under Mr. Carter's direction, 300 adults and children were in the musical program at First Baptist which included eight graded choirs and two handbell groups.

An article in the *High Point Enterprise* featuring the 150th Anniversary in 1975 noted that the Music Ministry was in great contrast to the original "rotating choir" which served the four churches in High Point in the latter part of the 1800s, including First Baptist, then known as Salem Street Baptist Church. At that early time, each of the four churches held services only once a month and the same choir sang for all churches, rotating among the churches from Sunday to Sunday.

Carter commented to the newspaper that soloists were members of the regular choir, rather than professionals, a practice our church still follows.

Carter expanded the number of choirs and handbell choirs during his eight years as Minister of Music. The ladies' handbell choirs attended festivals and always received very superior ratings under his leadership.

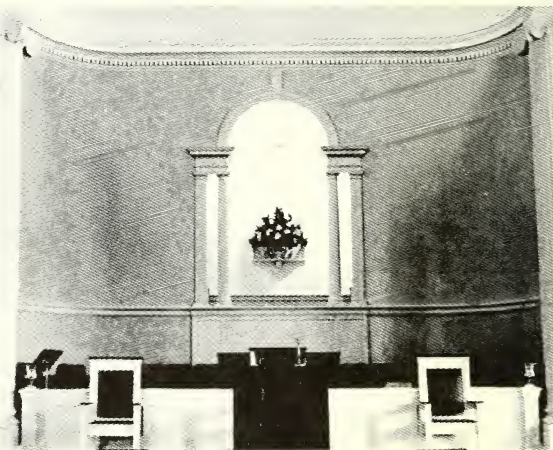
For a number of years the Youth Choir toured and ministered during summer vacation. In 1973 they went to Virginia, Connecticut, and New York City. In 1975 the choir was invited by the Canadian Baptist Convention of Ontario and Quebec and traveled 2,900 miles in 10 days on a mission-choir tour to Canada. Dr. Al Miller preached in six Canadian churches during that trip. The Youth Choirs also traveled on mission trips to West Virginia and Myrtle Beach, South Carolina.

The Adult Choir took a mini concert tour in 1978 to Pennsylvania, Virginia, and Washington, D.C.

In 1973 Glenn Pierce was hired as parttime music assistant while he completed his studies at Wake Forest University.

An Organ Committee was set up in the late 1960s to accept donations and memorial gifts toward the purchase of a new organ for the church. In 1972 the Music Committee of the church recommended that the church begin preparation to purchase a new pipe organ at a cost of approximately \$80,000 and to solicit and receive pledges and donations toward the purchase. The Committee reported that the present organ had been installed in 1941 when the church sanctuary was built and noted that a sanctuary the size of ours would normally contain a 38-49 rank pipe organ. Due to lack of space and small tonal openings, the existing organ had been limited to only 19 ranks. The report also said that mechanical failures "such as several Sundays ago, are becoming more and more evident....The action is very noisy, the combination action unreliable, airleaks

are in the chests, and much of the pipe work is in poor condition due to age." While these conditions could be corrected, the expense would be great and "we still could not be guaranteed against further failure." Several organ companies were contacted and



*Sanctuary before organ pipes were added*

each suggested 38 ranks of pipes as a minimum for a sanctuary with the seating capacity of First Baptist.

The Music Committee was authorized to solicit and receive pledges and donations and, after the funds reached a minimum of \$40,000, the Finance Committee was to budget and/or finance the balance. This Music Committee included Meta Best as chairman, Frances Quigley, J. U. White, E. C. Cridlebaugh, Rosalie Pruette, Ruth Adams, H. Clyde Williams, and Jerry Jones, who was Minister of Music at the time. Members were urged to give to the Organ Fund and the Church



*Sanctuary before renovation of 2001*

Choir had taken on the challenge of reaching certain monetary goals by November 15.

In 1974 a committee recommended that we purchase a 43 rank Schantz pipe organ for \$83,172 and remodel the organ chambers to accommodate the two pipe chambers. The old organ was donated to Mars Hill College. Six prospective buyers had been approached but none were interested. Mars Hill took on the expense of removing the organ, saving the church \$1,000.

Construction work for the remodeled choir loft and pipe chambers began in 1975. During installation, plastic was draped in front of the choir loft which couldn't be used. Thus, organist Sylvia Carter became pianist Sylvia Carter. The new organ was used for the first time on Sunday morning, November 1975. It was dedicated January 11, 1976 with H. Max Smith as guest organist. The organ debt was paid off in 1977.

Sylvia Carter Curl remembers: "I spent so many hours sitting on that bench learning music and just crying sometimes out of pure joy over the sounds I heard. It was a blessing to me and I hope to others."

That year, the choir presented a first for the High Point area, a "Singing Christmas Tree" made up of choir members on tiers erected in the choir loft in the shape of the traditional Christmas tree and covered



with some 75 to 80 live cedar boughs, along with 1,500 white lights. The structure measured some 35 feet by 40 feet. Three performances were given each year for several years on Saturday, Sunday, and



*Singing Christmas Tree*

Monday evenings. The public was invited and the sanctuary was filled for each performance. The event was widely advertised by all the media and the tradition was continued for several years.

“It was so thrilling to see the sanctuary fill up for each of the three nights in December we gave the program. Many people of the church



were involved in that program because there was lighting, assembling the tree, programs, etc.... The men of the church would get involved in cutting trees (about 150 cedar trees) to compose the singing tree which was made up of scaffolding, chicken wire, and the cedar trees,” Curl said.

After Gerald Carter left in 1981, interim music directors were Paul Charlton and Jim Hooks.

Bruce Hartgrove was hired as Minister of Music in 1981. He and his wife Sally were honored with a reception August 12, 2001 marking his 20th anniversary of service to First Baptist, the longest serving staff member in the history of the church. Sally also participates in many of the choirs, ensemble, and handbells and assists with children’s choirs.

A wide range and diversity of music has been performed at First Baptist from 1970 to 2000. Minister of Music Bruce Hartgrove strongly believes that different music styles appeal to different people. On any given Sunday, one could experience spirituals, folk, jazz, contemporary Christian, the *Messiah*, Youth praise bands and instrumental ensembles, and traditional hymn singing. At Christmas, the congregation joins the choir in singing the *Halleluiah Chorus* from the *Messiah*.

Offerings by the Adult Choir have included *Christmas-Gloria* by Vivaldi; *Ceremony of Carols* by Britten; *Many Moods of Christmas* by Shaw/Bennett; *Amahl and the Night Visitors*, an opera by Menotti; selections from the *Messiah*; *A Service of Lessons and Carols* by various composers; *Christmas Fantasia* by Hamilton; *The Gift* by Allen; *A Christmas Potpourri Yuletide Celebration* presented by the Adult Ensemble; *The Gospel Bard* by Hustad (a historical musical presented as a part of the 175th Anniversary of the church in 2000); *Celebrate Life* by Red/Courtney; *Christus* by Mendelssohn; *Music of Early American Composers* with harp, handbells, and organ; *How Great Thou Art* by Clydesdale; *Requiem* by Rutter, *Hope is Alive* by Allen; *Tell Me The Story of Jesus*; *Seven Last Words of Christ* by Dubois; *My Redeemer Lives* by Hamilton; *Risen This Day* by Harlan; *Love Came Down* by Salisbury; *Musical Stories for Puppets and People* by Kirkland; *Love You Spoke A Word* by Medema; *Walk in Love* by Burroughs; *The Light Brigade* by Gurley/McCall; *Live It To The Max* by Allen; *Wonderful, Most Awesome Counselor* by Allen; *A Christmas Legacy* by Wolaver; and a musical by Phil Young performed for the 100th anniversary of the North Carolina Baptist Children’s Homes.

In the middle of the 20th century, the Southern Baptist Convention began to train and develop a fully graded choir program and First

Baptist has had a strong and active music ministry for many decades. Hartgrove stated that he is privileged to build on what many other Music Ministers have done at First Baptist.

During the past three decades, First Baptist participated when the Southern Baptist Convention promoted an emphasis on hymn singing.



*Children's Choir in 2000*

An instrumental ensemble was begun in 1992 and a tympani purchased that year. An electronic synthesizer was purchased in 1995.

First Baptist also hosted many concerts by soloists and ensembles over the years, including professional artists Hale and Wilder, a patriotic concert by David and Linda Ford, and regular concerts by the Greensboro based Market Street Brass. In 1998 and again in 2000, the church was host for the North Carolina Statewide Youth Handbell Festival. In 1999 the church hosted the newly formed High Point Community Chorus. The North Carolina Baptist Singers (formerly the Singing Church Men/Church Women) performed in 2000. The Singers included our own Bruce and Sally Hartgrove and Angela Zimmerman.

The Adult Choir surprised Bruce Hartgrove by commissioning an anthem by Milburn Price in honor of Hartgrove's 12th anniversary with the church in 1991. Instead of beginning his sermon as planned, Dr. Lamar King announced the special performance of "The Heavens Are Singing," based on the 19th Psalm. As the choir stood to sing, former choir members came forward to join the tribute. Nancy Westmoreland, who has been a choir member for over 40 years, recalled they "practiced while Bruce was on vacation, and hid out the rest of the time at First Presbyterian Church, where there was an organ. We wanted this to be special. Bruce is our dear friend, as well as our teacher and our minister. Everything we sing is carefully chosen to enhance the sermon and to

present the Gospel as only music can do. As he has told us many times, our only purpose is to sing praises to God and not to entertain a congregation. No one has ever made working hard so much fun.” (*High Point Enterprise*)

The lyrics are by Timothy Dudley-Smith:

*The heavens are singing, are singing and praising, the depths of the earth and the mountains rejoice.*

*The trees and the forests are raising, are raising the song of creation in thunderous voice;*

*For God has redeemed us, redeemed us and bought us, remembered His people, and made us His choice!*

*The sun in its rising, its rising and setting, the stars in their courses, their Maker proclaim.*

*We only, His children, forgetting, forgetting the love of our Father, have turned to our shame;*

*Yet God has redeemed us, redeemed us and bought us, remembered His people and called us by name.*

*Creator eternal, eternally living, resplendent in glory, the Lord on the throne,*

*We praise and adore You, forgiving, forgiving, none other beside You, in mercy alone;*

*For God has redeemed us, redeemed us and bought us, remembered His people, and made us His own!*

*Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!*

Organist Mike Hill was hired in 1991. For many years he was a member of the Greater Greensboro Chapter of the American Guild of Organists. He was instrumental in organizing the 1993 All Saints Concert benefiting Hospice at First United Methodist Church on October 31, 1993. According to Elsie Hill, Hospice Bereavement Counselor, “Mike had been a caregiver with Hospice, so he saw Hospice in action. He had seen so many people touched and helped by Hospice.” (*High Point Enterprise*)



*Mike Hill*

Hill served until December 2000 when Susan Stanley became organist upon Hill's resignation. Stanley had been assistant organist, pianist, and choir accompanist for several years. She holds a Bachelor's

degree in Music from Northwestern University, a Master's degree in Music from Yale University and did extensive doctoral work in music at Boston University. She held organist/choir director positions at churches in New England, New York, Chicago, and Greensboro before coming to First Baptist in 1982.



Susan Stanley

The first Christmas Eve Communion Service was held in 1994.

An Adult Ensemble made up of choir members and non-choir members began in 1996.

In 1998 four octaves of choir chimes were purchased. According to Hartgrove, choir chimes differ from handbells in that they are “tuned bells that are held and rung in the ringer’s hand. Because they are made of an aluminum alloy, chimes are more durable than the bronze castings of handbells. Handbells can chip, crack, and tarnish from misuse; chimes will not. We use our chimes with beginning handbell ringers because of the ease of ringing and advantage of the durability.”

In honor of the 175th anniversary of First Baptist Church in 2000, composer Anna Laura Page was commissioned to compose an anthem. The words are by J. Paul Williams and incorporate the 100th Psalm:

*Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia! Praise the Lord;*

*Come, praise Him with one accord! Alleluia, alleluia!*

*Come, praise the living Lord, the God of might and pow’r, the God of love and peace.*

*Alleluia! Come, praise the Lord with songs that never cease!*

*Alleluia! O praise the Lord, with angel chorus sing.*

*Alleluia, alleluia! Let joy through heaven ring.*

*He made majestic mountains, green meadows, rolling seas.*

*Sing alleluia! Come, praise the Lord with songs that never cease!*

*Let every tongue His goodness show and sound abroad His fame;  
let every heart with praises flow and bless His holy name.*

*Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia! Praise the Lord,*

*Come, praise Him with one accord! Alleluia, alleluia!*

*Praise God, from whom all blessings flow; praise Him, all creatures here below;*

*Praise Him above, ye heav’nly host; praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.*

*Come, praise the Lord with songs that never cease!*



Today at First Baptist, in addition to the traditional choirs, handbell and instrumental ensembles offer alternative forms of musical expression and training. The handbells have been expanded to more than five octaves and choir chimes have been added. All musical groups participate in statewide festivals sponsored each year by the North Carolina Baptist State Convention.

Currently First Baptist has three children's choirs, three handbell choirs, an adult choir, adult ensemble, and instrumental ensemble. Hartgrove personally directs seven of these groups. A Youth Praise band is part of the Youth Ministry.



*Handbells in 1986. (Left to right: Frances Quigley, Gwen Smith, Karen Davis, Sally Hartgrove, Debbie Edwards, Adele Myers)*

## WOMAN'S MISSIONARY UNION

Records show that our first women's group was organized more than 100 years ago when the church was called Salem Street Baptist Church. The stated purpose at that time was "to aid the pastor in every way possible and to help any need in the community." Money that was pledged was "used by the women where they felt it was most needed." The organization at that time was known as the Ladies Aid Society.

"During the pastorate of Dr. C.S. Farriss, through the efforts of the Ladies' Aid Society, the church was (wall) papered.... A report in 1888 states 'our church has a flourishing Ladies' Aid Society. During the year this Society has raised for different church purposes \$123.94.

Of this, \$63.25 has been expended for church repairs....' The first silver communion set was bought with money which was raised by women of the church between 1890 and 1893...The records of this period (1904) show that women of the church through the Ladies' Aid Society raised money in many ways to help with the expenses....The money raised in this manner purchased a drugget [carpet], shades and table for the Ladies' Parlor, upholstered pulpit chairs, and repaired the old organ. Later the Society ordered a new pipe organ... On February 8, 1922, a committee was appointed from the Board of Deacons to meet with the Ladies' Aid Society to consider building a



100th Anniversary of WMU quilt

kitchen in the Sunday School area. This was completed....The ladies of the church had been concerned for some time that some members of the church were unable to hear the sermons and requested the privilege of installing hearing aid facilities for the convenience of the near deaf. This request was granted May 4, 1938." (from *History of the First Baptist Church 1825-1968*)

A century later, the Women's Missionary Union's (WMU) objective is published as: "As Christian believers by the power and leading of the Holy Spirit, we are committed to share the Gospel of Christ around the

world and to undergird and enhance the ministry and mission of the church.” The Denominational Theme stated, “In keeping with the Bold Mission Thrust vision, the primary thrust is to share the gospel with all people that they may come to God through Jesus Christ.”

Some of the projects WMU does best are to raise the commitment levels of the church congregation, enlarge the number of trained and skilled volunteers, expand the teaching ministry of the church, raise the level of giving, and strengthen the emphasis on missions. “We do not take credit for what God is doing in our church, but we can make our congregation aware of channels that God is using to meet needs of our people.” (2001-2002 WMU Yearbook)

Objectives of the WMU include challenging its members to be beyond the ordinary in their relationships with God and others and making certain that the WMU will lead the church to anticipate and participate in the awesome works of God in their communities and around the world. The WMU vision statement reads: “The WMU challenges Christian believers to understand and be radically involved in the mission of God.”

A partial listing of WMU projects in 2000 includes contributions to Baptist Children’s Homes and to local, state, global, and Lottie Moon offerings; meals to bereaved church families; hosting the Central Baptist Association Annual Session of WMU; supporting the Macedonia Christian Center, Operation Inasmuch, and Faith Journey; support of a Youth lunch and yard sales for youth mission trips; donation of 100 dictionaries to the High Point Jail Ministry Education Service; making sandwiches and serving meals for Open Door Ministries; delivering Mobile Meals; providing volunteer workers for the Recreation Ministry desk; mentoring the Youth in the church; delivering tapes for the Tape Ministry; teaching the Vietnamese in Sunday School; mentoring the Vietnamese; participating in the church-wide Prayer Ministry; and hosting the World Day of Prayer city-wide meeting. The WMU participates in Church Women United, an international organization of Christian women from diverse backgrounds. Locally 46 churches participate in six meetings a year. “The purpose of CWU is to encourage church women to come together in a visible fellowship to witness to their faith in Jesus Christ as Divine Lord and Savior; and enabled by His spirit, to go out together in every neighborhood and nation as instruments of His reconciling love.”

The WMU is made up of Women on Missions Union, Girls in Action (GAs) Mission Friends, Youth on Mission, and a Prayer Ministry.



Among the Girls in Action projects were organizing a bake sale to raise money for Bibles for the Women's Job Corps program in South Africa; filling over 400 Christmas shoe boxes for needy children through Operation Christmas Child, a project of Samaritan's Purse; and soliciting church-wide participation in the collection of new and used Bibles and religious literature as a Global Mission project. The diversity of these projects illustrate the scope of the WMU work that has



*Girls in Action (GAs) in 1979*

continued in a vastly changing society in the last third of the 20th century. Because a great percentage of women have pursued jobs and careers, evening and Saturday morning meetings for WMU were added.

The beginning of the 21st century found the WMU of First Baptist Church meeting new challenges. Late in 2001 the group spearheaded a church-wide special offering for victims and rescue workers at the sites of terrorist attacks against the country in New York City and Washington, D.C.

One of the most recent projects brings together volunteers once a month to make pads for cancer patients through Hospice. Some 25 women, including non-members of WMU and members of the Vietnamese mission congregation, cut, assemble, and package the pads. Over 1,600 pads were delivered to Hospice after the first day of work on the project. Businesses in the city donated all the materials.

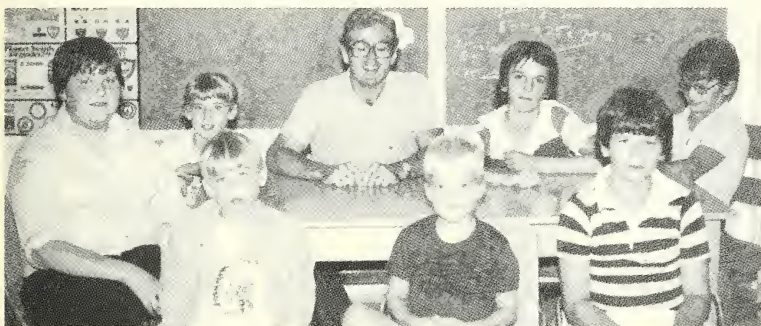


## BROTHERHOOD/BAPTIST MEN/ MEN'S FELLOWSHIP

Minutes from the Men's Fellowship meeting, April 25, 1950 state that a group met to organize a Men's Fellowship. W.A. (Bill) Horney, Jr., was elected president. Speakers at the meeting discussed doctrine, politics, other religions, and personal growth.

Minutes from July 31, 1951 state that a meeting was "called to discuss and suggest our group officially joining the Southern Baptist Brotherhood." A subsequent vote was approved and the first meeting of the First Baptist Church Brotherhood was August 28, 1951.

Bill Spradlin, Minister of Education, spoke to a Brotherhood meeting August 25, 1953 about the history of the Brotherhood movement which had begun in 1936. It is a promotional agency of the church whose purpose is to discover and create a willingness to serve. It should promote the work of the church. Spradlin noted that there were 215,000 members of the Brotherhood nationwide.



*Royal Ambassadors (RAs) with David Tiller in late 1970s*

Baptist Men is an auxiliary of the North Carolina Baptist State Convention. It offers 13 individual ministries through which it reaches out to help others, including agricultural, aviation, construction, correctional, international, medical/dental, resort, sports missions and disaster relief, family foundation, lay renewal, lay revival, prayer support, and Appalachian Regional ministries. Baptist Men offered disaster aid in New York City after the Sept. 11, 2001 terrorist attacks and have supplied aid after several hurricanes devastated parts of North Carolina in the 1990s. First Baptist participates in many of these ministries.

In 1998 the Baptist Men met their goal of \$15,000 to help support the

building of one unit of a 16 bed group house as part of the High Point Halfway House for the homeless, a joint effort of Open Door Ministries, Habitat for Humanity, and area churches. The house was needed because, according to the August 10, 1998 *Church Herald*, "it takes time to make lifestyle changes. Once a person has reached a certain point, a change in environment is necessary in the process of developing a sense of responsibility. In many cases, it is recommended that a move be made to transitional housing for six months to one year." The home is officially called the Arthur Cassell Memorial Transitional Housing Project. Baptist Men had breakfasts, lunches, and golf tournaments to raise money for the project.

## DEACONS

In 1978 First Baptist took a historic step by ordaining its first women deacons, Meta Best and Betsy Moss, basing the selection on 1 Timothy 3:11: "Those who do well as deacons will be well rewarded both by respect from others and also by developing their own confidence and bold trust in the Lord." (*The Living Bible*)

Persons nominated to serve as deacon during 1978 through 1980 included Meta Best, Virginia Cox, John Davis, John Edwards, George Gillie, Byron Godfrey, Bobbie Hodgin, Garland Ledford, Betsy Moss, Frances Quigley, John Reavis, Harold Reaves, T. G. Shelton, Nancy Westmoreland, and J. U. White.

The Deacons have played a large part in the growth of First Baptist Church. Once an organization largely devoted to church administration, many Deacons were not always fully involved in the church. In April 2001 the Deacons moved to a gift based ministry involving the entire church. This allowed the Deacons to share the ministry work and become more involved. The Gift Based Ministry allows all church members the opportunity to help where they feel led, according to their abilities and interests. They can choose from service, teaching, worship, or witness opportunities. Service includes visitation, benevolence, recreation, support groups, and homebound ministries. Teaching includes new member training, Bible study, leadership training, and mission study groups. Worship includes giving devotionals, serving on committees which react within the worship service, giving testimonies, and leading worship as needed. Witness includes outreach ministries, jail ministry help, short term mission projects, and promoting fellowship and Bible study groups. Over 186 members signed up the first day

to join the Gift Based Ministry, offering such services as casserole meals, visitation, helping hands, staff support, prayer, celebration, and providing rides.

## YOUTH

In a survey conducted in September 1974 we found there were 200 teenagers on the church rolls with approximately 60-65 attending regularly. We decided that we needed to hire a permanent youth director following the resignation of Clyde Hall in August 1974. David Coggins also served as Youth Director from 1973 to 1974. Don Austin was called as Minister of Education and Youth Activities in 1975.

Other Youth Ministers have been David Tiller (1978 - 1980), Danny Nolen (part time 1980 - November 1981), Dale Watts (full time March 14, 1982 - October 23, 1983), Frank Smith April (1984 - 1994), Stan Vaughn (1995 - June 30, 1997), Curt Hernandez (1999 - 2000), and current minister Ben Vogler who was hired January 2001.

For several years during the 1970s, the youth traveled on Youth Choir

Tours around the country as a part of the Music Ministry.

In 1978 the Youth of the church became concerned about the problem of world hunger and, with the help of the church, organized an auction and raised over \$1,800 for world hunger, that money going to the Foreign Mission Board for distribution.

Future auctions raised more funds for world hunger.

Frank Smith has said that some of his goals when becoming Youth Minister were "to help the church grow in members and in my previous churches that had happened as the youth group grew, so did the church. I saw this happen at First Baptist when youth would get involved in the youth ministry and then bring their entire family to join the church. Another goal was growth in the number of youth participating and joining the church. This goal was met through providing youth with opportunities to be involved in Sunday School,



*David Tiller*



*Frank Smith*



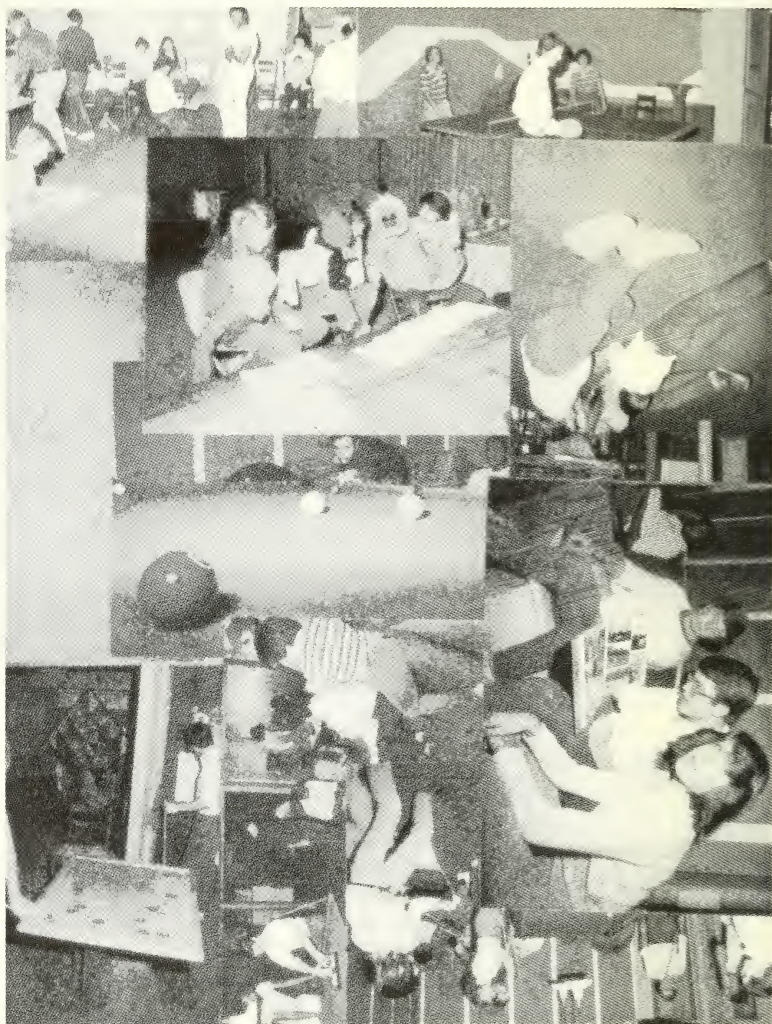
*Curt Hernandez*



*Ben Vogler*



worship, missions, discipleship training, retreats, camps, music, and recreation. Our group seemed to grow quickly as they reached out to other teens in High Point and invited them to participate. Another goal was to involve them in the total life of the church through worship leadership and participation in church-wide events and activities. This group loved being together in church and outside the church. Following Bible study and discipleship training each Sunday evening, we had a



*Youth Ministries in 1979*



fellowship time for them to be together. They learned very quickly that they were not only the future of the church, they were the church and their work and participation made a difference to them and others.



*First Baptist Youth prepare to leave for World Youth Conference*

“Our trip to the (11th) Baptist World Youth Conference in Glasgow, Scotland (July 19 - August 2, 1988) was one of the biggest undertakings for the church in its history. In the fifteen months preceding the conference, the church raised over \$55,000 to help with the cost of each student. We had 58 youth and adults participate in the two week trip. Raising the money and getting ready for the trip was almost as rewarding as the trip itself. From children to senior adults, this was a church wide project. It took the entire church to make the event happen and in many ways brought the church together in a new and exciting way as they focused on getting the youth to Scotland. (In order to raise money for the trip, the Youth sponsored ‘Youth Dining for Scotland’ meals.) The trip itself still stands out in my memory as one of the best experiences I have had in over thirty years of ministry. Youth who participated, almost twenty years ago, still remember that trip as the time they met Baptist youth from all over the world and [the trip] gave them a new understanding of and appreciation for Baptists worldwide. There were so many incredible stories of the sacrifices made in order for Baptist youth to attend. I also believe that it was out of sending the youth to this conference that First Baptist adults committed themselves to work as part of the youth ministry team. There were always enough adults to help with any need the youth had from teaching Sunday School to chaperoning trips.”



*First Baptist delegation mingles with other attendees at the World Youth Conference*

Youth participating in the Baptist World Youth Conference were John Brooks, Cattelya Burapavong, Marlene Edwards, Jonathan Fraser, Stacie Gahagan, Anita Gillis, Brooks Godfrey, Paula Godfrey, Mark Griffey, Tony Griffey, Heather Haberfield, Kenneth Haggerty, Chip Harris, Jason Henderson, John Henderson, Chad Hooks, Robbie Hooks, Jennifer Howard, Meredith Howard, Alison Howard, Chris King, Connie King, Laurie Lambeth, Kathryn Larkins, Susan Logsdon, Beverly McGee, Jimmy McGee, Chris Martin, Stephanie Miller, Lanie Moore, Angie Newton, Eric Perdue, Wayne Perdue, Jr., Jonathan Pressley, Christy Schultheiss, Brian Schultheiss, Jean Smith, Chesnee Smith, Tess Smith, Amy Staley, Christy Sterenberg, Melinda Vickers, Scott White, David Wood, Brad Yoder, and Bobby Yoder. Adults were Susan Howard, Clif Kelley, Debbie Kelley, Lamar King, Corinne King, Mary Jo McGee, Wayne Perdue, Maxine Perdue, Mena Shufelt, Donna Sterenberg, Frank Smith, and Gwen Smith.

The Church Herald of August 9, 1988 published many sentiments on the trip:

"The Baptist World Youth Conference brought a new dedication of my life to God and a true and sincere effort to give my life to the goal of spreading His word to others." - Paula Godfrey

"I thought the conference was excellent. I felt like God was standing right next to me. He changed my life." - Alison Howard

"This trip meant a lot to me and helped me grow closer to God. I wouldn't pay a million dollars to have stayed home." - Christy Schultheiss

"I really felt that I needed guidance from the Lord. The Lord through the Baptist World Youth Conference helped me find guidance and to keep focus of my life." - Tony Griffey

The Youth have published several cookbooks, collecting recipes from church members. The latest one was in 1999. Proceeds from this and other fundraising benefit the Youth Ministry.

Recognizing the fact that people respond best to a leader to whom they can relate, several of the Youth were on the Search Committee for a Youth Minister in 2000 and had a significant impact on the decision making process. In times when the church has been without a Youth Minister, many parents and other interested parties stepped forward to take over the leadership responsibilities for the Youth.

According to a 2001 brochure, "the purpose of the Youth Ministry at First Baptist Church High Point is to bring youth to Christ. We provide opportunities to meet the needs of youth through Biblical teaching, discipleship, and worship experiences, so that they become vital members of the corporate body of Christ. Our goal is to help teenagers grow from childhood into adulthood dependent on God as He is revealed in Jesus through His Word and in the power of the Holy Spirit. Teenagers can become as involved as they choose. Their options include ministry, fellowship, Bible study, recreation, celebration and worship."

Current weekly activities include WOW (Worship on Wednesdays), a time to unwind and worship. Sunday evenings are the time for X-Tream, a "high energy Sunday night celebration" with games, a Praise Band, singing, skits, and study. Many of our young people are members of the Handbell Choir and Instrumental Ensemble, both of which often

## First Family Youth Ministry



*Jeff, Chris, and William in  
the Youth Center in 1980*



*Youth whitewater rafting trip around 1990*



perform for Sunday morning services. Yearly activities include a ski/Bible retreat, a spring retreat, summer mission trip, summer beach retreat at Fort Caswell, a fall retreat, and monthly mission opportunities.



*Meredith Howard remembers Youth Ski Trip*

Part of the Youth Ministry is the Youth Council, responsible for helping shape the direction of the Ministry in the church. The Council meets monthly and holds a leadership role among the Youth. Parents and Youth join together in Lead Teams to help plan ministry and social opportunities.

In 2001, Youth Minister Ben Vogler initiated the Care Giver program—one adult mentoring one youth for one year. During this time period, the Care Giver would commit to praying daily for the student they are assigned, to making some sort of contact once a month with that student, to making periodic progress reports to the Minister of Youth/Recreation



*Youth Trip in 1986*

as to how this effort is going, and would make this commitment for one year, beginning with the assignment of the student.

Sunday, April 28, 2002 was the dedication day of the new Youth Ministries Center in the building formerly occupied by the Golden B Restaurant. The Center is part of the Faith Journey Campaign and contains a meeting room, a stage, classroom, lounge, recreation area, and kitchen. According to an article in the *High Point Enterprise*, Ben Vogler said



the youth had outgrown their old space and “they’re definitely excited about this building, and they’re starting to be excited about who they are as First Baptist Church youth.” While the building was in the planning stages, the Youth said, “this could be a hub for doing things for the community...feed the hungry people, (or) do various projects.”

“We’re already doing a monthly missions thing, but just being in this building, the creativity just jumped out of them,” Vogler said.



*Youth Bible School in 1999*

## RECREATION



*Softball Team in 1980s*

Sports has played a significant role in the church, recognizing the need to be fit in both body and spirit. Over the years, First Baptist has sponsored many teams in sports as a means of both inreach and outreach. Softball and basketball teams from First Baptist compete with other churches in High Point and have won awards from the Central Baptist Association Men's Athletic League. The Recreation Committee sponsors a city church basketball league each year. For several years we have sponsored basketball and volleyball camps in the summer. Aerobics classes have met in the gym and the gym also is used for many church-related sporting events. Golf tournaments are held at least once a year at area courses with teams made up of church members and guests. Golfers participated in a tournament in Pinehurst in 2001 and



*Adult Ski Trip to Colorado in 1990s  
(Grady Stone, Ron and Ann Stroup, Judy Powers,  
Mena Shufelt, Mike Powers, Donna Sternberg,  
Carol Brooks, Frank Smith)*

enjoyed a beach golf weekend in September 2001. Yearly ski trips are offered to area slopes.

In 1996, following the spirit of the 1996 Summer Olympic Games held in Atlanta, Georgia, the First Family Invitational Athletic, Social, and Comedic Olympics (FFIASCO) were held. All ages were invited. Events were not of normal Olympic standard but consisted of basketball free throws, balloon stuffing into panty hose, preschool children racing three-wheelers, dizzy bat race, hula hoop endurance, frisbee toss, and more.



*F5 (First Family Fall Foot Fellowship) or Square Dance*

Former Youth Minister Frank Smith said, "The goal that I was most excited about [when I was first hired] was to help the church develop a recreation ministry, program for recreation needs, and help design a recreation ministry center to meet the needs of the church. The completion and operation of the Recreation Ministries Center [in 1991] brought a sense of pride and provided a new and exciting tool for new ministry opportunities."

Church picnics are held twice a year at the High Point City Lake Park with lots of food, fun, and entertainment.

First Family Fellowships began in 1995. One Sunday a month we would gather in the gym for games, drama, fellowship, and food provided by the Youth. For several years the Recreation Committee has sponsored a Square Dance and barbecue supper which is fun even for those not nimble of foot.

## LIBRARY/MEDIA CENTER

What today is known as the Media Center of First Baptist began simply as a church library.

On September 5, 1945, the church voted to establish a "Memorial Library" in honor of fifteen young men from our church who lost their lives in service in World War II. Mr. and Mrs. A. Lee Gibson gave the bronze plaque which lists the names: Gilmer A. Aycock, Albert D. Brockett, Gilbert W. Clark, Jr., Charles N. Coleman, Samuel M. Collier, Jr., Jack Hunter Gibson, Clyde A. Griffith, Banks Hamilton, Clayton M. Holt, Robert Lehman, Gilbert D. Lloyd, James E. Potts, Charles G. Seward, William C. Shelton, and Howell M. Wagner. Photos of those honored are displayed in the Heritage Room.

The first volumes donated to the Library were given by what was then known as the Jones Bible Class and is now the Dr. Lloyd Thayer class.

Today, not only books, but videos, maps, and other visual aides are selected to assist teachers who serve all ages in the Sunday School and other special classes offered during the year. The Library is open during regular church office hours as well as on Sundays.

The mission statement of the Library states: "The mission of the First Baptist Church's media library is to provide resources and services to enhance the quality of ministry, discipleship, fellowship, and worship in the lives of the members of First Baptist Church and those to whom they witness in obedience to the Great Commission."

In providing information to users of the Library, the ministry of the facility ultimately is to involve and assist in equipping persons to witness as well as enhancing individual and group worship.

Since the mid 1960s, Virginia Cox has served as director of the Library and for the last 20 years has been assisted by her husband Jack. Virginia holds a Master's Degree in Library Science and Jack is retired as Assistant Superintendent of High Point City Schools in charge of Building and Grounds.

In 2000, the Library staff included Steve Cox, Bobbie Hodgins, Adele Myers, Bernie Sheffield, Gayle Smoot, and Krystal Wolfe.

The library presently contains approximately 4,500 print volumes. Each volume includes a seal on the flyleaf in remembrance of the World War II servicemen.



## SPECIAL WORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

Many people attend church in part because they like and feel comfortable with the traditional service format and the familiar hymns. Others want upbeat contemporary Christian praise music with amplifiers, drums, and microphones. Others preferred different times for service. Many people were looking for something different in religion in the 1990s. Churches had to change with the times. Worshipers looked for more than just a minister who could preach a good sermon. They wanted a church with more depth and substance, more than just a Sunday morning sermon.

Recognizing the need to reach people with diverse worshiping needs, over the years First Baptist, like many other churches, has initiated several different opportunities for worship.

In today's society there are many opportunities for family activities. During the week, many families may see each other only minutes each day because they are scattered in so many activities. With that in mind, many families choose to stay together on Sundays. This dynamic led to dwindling attendance for Sunday night services in the 1980s and the church made the decision to do away with Sunday evening services. Training Union had been eliminated in the 1970s. However, small groups do still meet on Sunday nights for Bible Study and each August the church meets Sunday nights at Oak Hollow Campground for services followed by a social time featuring ice cream, hot dogs, or watermelon.

For several years, Minister of Music Bruce Hartgrove has periodically injected contemporary Christian music and choruses into the Sunday morning services. He feels the need to reach out to people of all musical tastes. "The early Christians used a variety of musical styles in their worship, including psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs. I try to bring the best of all the current styles to our worship at First Baptist. On any given Sunday, we have congregants who appreciate classical music, traditional anthems, gospel songs, hymns, choruses, and contemporary music. In order to effectively minister to the entire congregation, I feel that it is my duty to bring varied styles of music to our worship," he said.

In October 1996, under the leadership of Dr. Al Cadenhead, First Baptist began having two morning services. Although it did not stray too far from the traditional service style, "Morning Watch" began with fellowship at 8:30 a.m., followed by worship at 8:45 in the Dining Room for a more informal service. The idea for Morning Watch came out of long-range planning forums in May and June 1996 where there

was a desire to provide a slightly more informal service, the goal of which would be to involve people from the community who were not presently active in a church. Although the service did not actually target a specific group, the younger generations tended to be attracted to a less formal, more praise style worship. It also gave worshipers an alternative time to attend worship and not feel compelled to wear "Sunday best" clothes. There was no choir and the same sermon was preached at this and the 11:00 a.m. service. Originally set up for a six month trial, Morning Watch continued until November 1998.

A completely informal and casual style of worship began Saturday night, February 3, 2001, when the music group "Changed Heart" performed in the gym. An estimated 400+ people attended the concert of familiar beach music tunes with new Christian lyrics. Sponsored by the Outreach Ministry of the church, the concert/worship service was not typical contemporary Christian music but music aimed to bring non-church people into church. Organizers hoped we would expect the unexpected (smoke machines and strobe lights), let our hair down and enjoy Jesus.

In an interview with an area newspaper, Dr. Bill Slater said, "It's a contemporary worship service. The music may be different and the setting might be different, but the intention is still to glorify God. There is no precedent in the community for this type of worship. We are trying to go outside the box to reach people."

The concerts were scheduled for one Saturday night per month for six months. "Changed Heart" still performs in the area, with periodic concerts at First Baptist.

For several years, children's sermons have been offered during morning worship. Members take turns telling a story to the children gathered at the front of the sanctuary.

## BUILDING/GROUNDS

The physical plant of First Baptist consists of six separate building stages. The area just behind the sanctuary was built in 1912. It was the location of the church offices, pastor's study, and library until an extensive renovation in 2003 as part of Faith Journey necessitated relocation. The area between the 1912 section and the Recreation Ministries section, where the Music Suite is located, was built in 1929. It also was renovated in 2003. The sanctuary, which was renovated in late 2001, was built in 1941. The Educational Building on the South side was built in 1959 and the Recreation Ministries Center was built in 1991. Obviously, by necessity, some areas have needed remodeling and improvements over the years.

In the 1970s, when the church ran a Day Care Center, a safe, secure area to play was made by fencing in the courtyard area with playground equipment added.

In March 1974, the theater style seats in the choir loft were replaced with pews. Later that year, on September 30, a recommendation was made to purchase a new organ for \$83,172 and to remodel the organ chambers so the pipes could be exposed. The new 43-rank Schantz pipe organ was installed and dedicated in November of 1975.

In January of 1978 we looked into the possibility of buying the parking lot next door for \$1,500,000 and also looked into purchasing a security system for the church. On April 8, 1979, we voted by two-thirds majority to buy the parking lot property adjacent to the church (fronting N. Main, Church, and N. Elm streets) at the new price of \$800,000 from J. N. Wright with a total of \$500,000 to be paid at closing and the balance to be repaid over a period of 10½ years at 6% interest. The site is approximately 2½ acres and included a building on the corner of Church and N. Elm, formerly a Sears Auto Service Center and at that time leased by the Golden B Restaurant and Shampoo, Ltd. hair salon. Woodroe Haywood, Church Treasurer, made a substitute motion that the Stewardship Committee raise an additional \$100,000 from the membership by a special solicitation and that they also obtain pledges of at least \$200,000 in addition to the regular budget pledges, to be paid in over a three year period, before any vote be taken to purchase the Wright Property. This passed, and we were able to pay off the loan in September 1989. First Baptist has a long history with this property. We had been interested in the property since the 1950s when it was a city

park (Tate Park) and Elm Street School was on the Golden B property. Cost at that time would have been \$165,000, but the bid was upset. Over the years, Mr. Wright had generously allowed us to use the unpaved lot on Sundays.

In 1980 the lower auditorium was renovated and remodeled. In October 1980 a feasibility committee was formed to study need for a Family Life Center. Seat pads were added to the pews in the sanctuary in mid-1981, a gift from member John Davis. Member Mamie Vail made a gift of \$25,000 to renovate the pastor's study and conference room in late 1982.

Throughout the 1980s many plans were proposed to add a new entrance to the church on the north side, adjacent to the parking lot, but none of these plans were carried out.

In October 1982 plans were presented to renovate the music facilities and expand it into former Sunday School classrooms to provide a larger choir room, handbell rehearsal room, larger robe rooms, larger music library, storage space for music supplies, and Minister of Music office space. These plans were vetoed but a new proposal in 1983 to widen the driveway, renovate office spaces, and renovate the music rooms was approved for \$300,000 and completed in 1985 for \$320,000.

"Building to Serve" was the theme for the fundraising campaign which opened with Pledge Sunday, November 20, 1983. Sunday, November 27, was designated as the "Day of Thanksgiving and Rejoicing" when results of the campaign were to be announced. The 915 families of the church were given a chart which set out ways in which the \$300,000 challenge goal could be met.

The church became handicapped accessible in 1986 with the addition of a ramp at the front of the sanctuary and an elevator in the center of the building.

Additional parking lot property became available in 1987 and the church had to make several decisions. The most important one of all would be whether the time would come when the church might feel the need to move to a new location, as numerous other churches had done after a number of their members moved to the suburbs. In 1987 First Baptist Church had been in existence 162 years and at the same location in downtown High Point for 128 years. There were many things that still needed to be done as a downtown ministry and the congregation felt that a Baptist presence was needed downtown. Therefore, the church committed itself to remaining in its historic Main Street location.



The second major decision facing the church was whether to purchase the additional parking lot acreage, now priced at \$1,000,000, and then build on it later for an additional \$1,200,000 or to add onto our existing building at that time and purchase the parking lot later if it was still available. The church voted to add on in the form of a Recreation Ministries Center.

At that time, the church membership had been declining for twenty years but had begun showing a reversal of the trend, although the church was gaining only about the same number of members it was losing each year.

On August 30, 1987, preliminary plans were first presented for the Recreation Ministries Center. Cost was to be \$1.9 million. When the church voted on the motion, presented by R. V. Moss, to undertake the construction of a Family Life Center, the vote was by secret ballot. The vote 200 for and 120 against. The *Church Herald* noted that "First Baptist Church has a history of friendly, lively debate over matters concerning the church; but we are also noted for rallying behind decisions of the body once the vote is taken. Let us all covenant that this decision will be the beginning of an exciting new era in the life of our church. The committees who will follow up on the church's vote will be in touch with us very soon."

This historic vote in 1987 came three years after deacons of the church had requested that a Long Range Planning Committee study future needs of the church. In the decades prior to undertaking the Family Life Center, numerous projects had been successfully completed by the church. These included the purchase of the adjacent parking lot property in 1979, renovation of the office area and music suite in 1985, the purchase of a new church bus for \$44,000 and purchase of a new church van for \$17,000, plus other maintenance and improvement projects to various areas of the church building.

On February 4, 1990 plans were presented for the Recreation Ministries Center by John S. Clark Construction Co., at a cost of \$1,508,165. Expenses for the following were not to exceed stated amounts: public address system for dining room and gym \$4,110, furnishings \$25,000, kitchen equipment \$27,000, fitness room equipment \$14,213, game room equipment \$13,600. Estimate for new tables/chairs for dining room was \$19,998.

The church voted in 1987 to hire Cargill & Associates to assist in a campaign to raise funds for the building extension. "To God Be The Glory" was the name given the building program with the theme "Not

Equal Gifts But Equal Sacrifice.” Wayne and Faye Chambers served as directors of the campaign for the building fund. Their committee included Tom and Marilyn Freeman, Jack and Betty Williams, Clif and Debbie Kelly, Ray and Mena Shufelt, Clarence and Jenny Herndon, David and Karen Perry, Suzanne King, George and Sandra Crouch, Garland and Virginia Ledford, Dolen and Nell Hedrick, Larry and Brenda Newsom, Charles and Rita Bowers, Dennis and Hazel Young, and Bill and Susan Howard.

In a called business session, the awarding of a \$1,508,165 contract for the construction of the RMC was approved. Trustees of the church were authorized to borrow funds of any unpaid balance, up to \$900,000 from Wachovia Bank and Trust Co. Trustees at the time were Jack Williams, Wayne Chambers, R. V. Moss, Dennis Young, and John Rhodenhiser.



*Groundbreaking for Recreation Ministries Center*

Groundbreaking was February 18, 1990. The *Church Herald* of February 13 read: “Churches have groundbreakings on special occasions. Groundbreaking Ceremonies symbolize the end of something old and the beginning of something new. Our ground breaking will symbolize the end of years of dreaming, planning, praying, and meeting. It will also symbolize the beginning of a bright new venture for First Baptist Church. On Sunday morning, toward the conclusion of morning worship, we will gather at the site for our new Family Life Center and break ground. The shovelfuls of earth we turn will be but the beginning of a

happy, exciting construction project that will result in a building to be used mightily in God's work here at 405 N. Main Street. Everyone from toddlers to senior adults will be blessed by this new building. So everyone is invited! Come Sunday morning, February 18, and help us break ground." An article on February 18, 1990 in the *High Point Enterprise* read, "If all goes as planned, First Baptist Church will become the largest church complex in downtown High Point by year's end....The center represents the first major building project at the church since 1954." Dr. Lamar King is quoted as saying, "We want this new building to bring glory to God, to represent an investment of treasure in heaven. We have traditionally been a missionary church. That doesn't mean just winning the lost, but it means sharing the abundant life and helping

people find the best quality of life possible. We have a lot of lonely people, economically deprived people and people who have normal human and social needs in High Point. We see meeting those needs as part of what a church is supposed to be. We really hope, through this recreation building, to make the entire community a better place to live by doing our part in that." This signified First Baptist's "renewed commitment to providing a strong spiritual focus in downtown High Point." King went on, "There is a definite trend for churches to move out of downtown locations and into the suburbs. First Baptist Church of High Point will not make such a move. We believe strongly that it is



*Groundbreaking for Recreation Ministries Center  
(Dr. Lamar King, Kevin Logan, Minnie Davis,  
Louise Raper, Doris Raper)*



the Lord's calling for us to remain a spiritual lighthouse in downtown High Point....This family life center will enable our church to spiritually enrich families within and outside our church and encourage development of the whole person. The new facility will also meet pressing needs in our church family.



*Recreation Ministries Center*

Over the past few years, our church has received many new, young families. We have also seen our youth group swell to a size we can no longer accommodate in our present facilities.”



*Dining Hall*

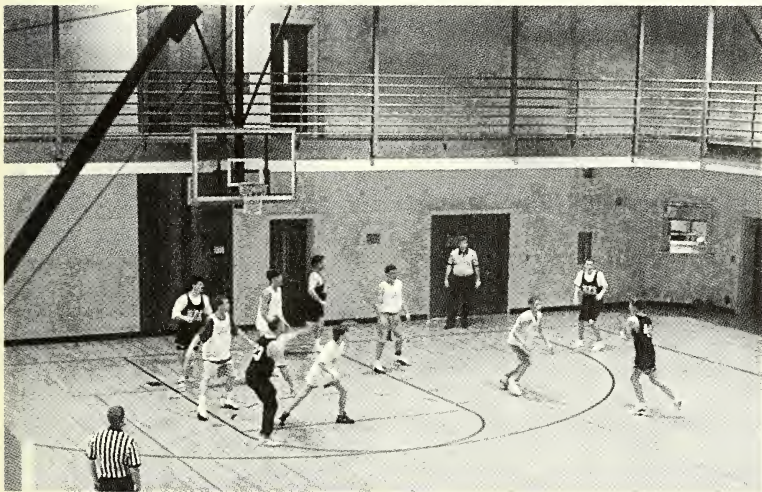
The opening of the Recreation Ministries (or Family Life Center) on June 5, 1991 was a major step in First Baptist's long time commitment to continue its ministry at a downtown location, even though statistics showed the city's major population growth was away from the center of the city. Dr. Lamar King noted that First Baptist was the only Southern Baptist Church remaining in downtown High Point. The Recreation Ministries Center (RMC) was the first such facility built by a church in High Point.

A Mission Statement drawn up to state the purpose of the Recreation



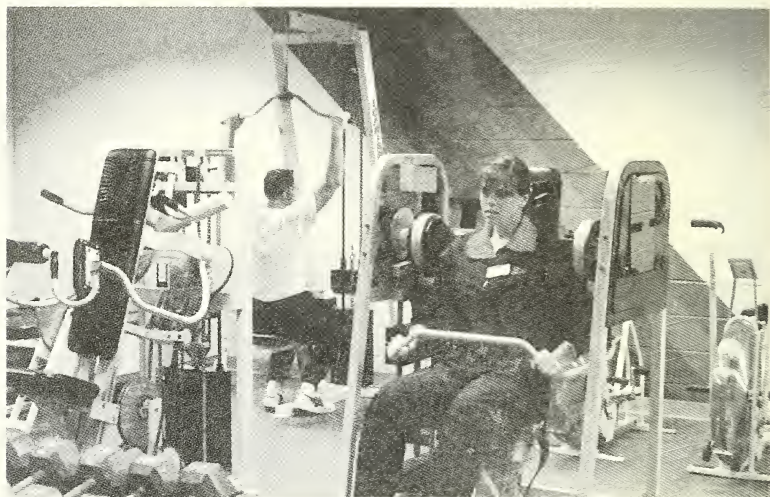
Ministries Center read, in part: "Our mission is to use this facility as a tool for outreach, fellowship, and wellness for our church and all who use it....We believe that God is interested in the total person—spiritual, physical, social, and mental. We expect this facility to be a different place in a Christlike way. The ministries and activities housed in this facility should reflect His character, our point of view, and policies. Even the building design is intended to give Jesus Christ the honor. Our commitment is to Him. Your conduct is expected to reflect the full understanding that this is the Lord's house every bit as much as our sanctuary is. Help us attain this goal today while you use this facility." Early discussions about the Center included the possibility of opening the building as a soup kitchen to the disadvantaged and providing shelter on cold nights to homeless. We now refer people to Open Door Ministries on N. Centennial Avenue for these needs.

The RMC includes a covered driveway entrance, permitting members to be dropped off in inclement weather and is designed for easy access for the handicapped. A spacious lobby is the focal point for weekday visitors and members entering and leaving the church. A volunteer at a "Control Desk" directs visitors to other areas of the church. Since the RMC entrance has become the main entrance to the church, the lobby also serves as a reception center on Sunday mornings for visitors and guests, as well as members. An office and a small conference room are located in this area.



*Basketball is just one sport using the RMC*

A regulation size gymnasium, the first built by a church in High Point, includes a walking track. These facilities are available to members and to non-members of the church for a nominal fee, either with a Walking Club or a Fitness Club membership. Each person registers at the desk upon entering and signs out upon leaving. The gymnasium also was designed to be used for special occasions when the regular dining room could not accommodate the expected crowd. In late 2001, while the sanctuary was being renovated, Sunday morning worship services were held in the gym.



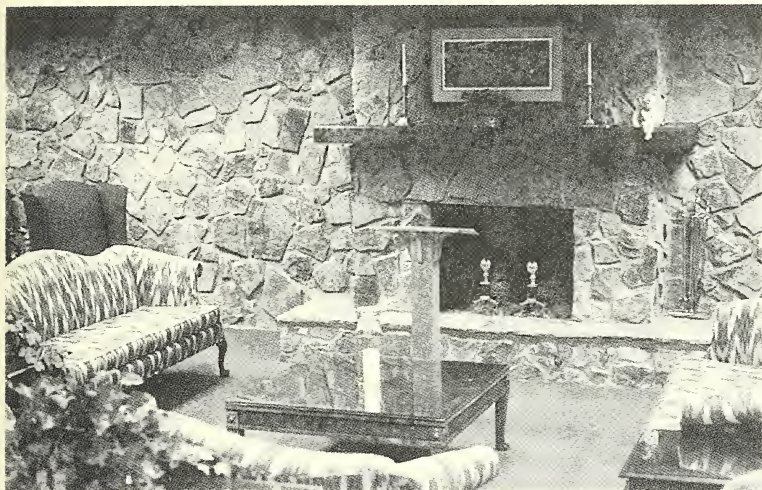
*Fitness Room*

An exercise/fitness room offers Nautilus equipment, treadmills, and stationary bicycles for use under controlled conditions. Restrooms and showers are available off the lobby.

As part of the Recreation Ministries Center, a 400 capacity dining room, which was described as “desperately needed” was included for Wednesday evening meals, receptions, covered dish luncheons, and similar church functions. This room replaced the old Fellowship Hall which was built in 1959 and the small kitchen. In addition, the Vietnamese Church uses the dining room area for Sunday morning worship as they anticipate having their own building. The old Fellowship Hall was remodeled into craft rooms and a maintenance/storage area.

The old church kitchen, which had served for many years and was described as “woefully inadequate,” was replaced in the new building

with a new kitchen with up-to-date appliances and was designed to be closed off completely, thus eliminating kitchen noise distractions when functions were underway. A cafeteria serving line allows for rapid meal service for the informal meetings.



*Fireside Room*

A Fireside Room in the RMC provides a pleasing setting for small, informal gatherings and receptions, even small weddings. A patio opens off the Fireside Room to expand its usability. This room is located just across the hall from the kitchen, providing easy access to food service.

A Churchwide Commitment Banquet was held April 7, 1991 to inaugurate the new building and was the first official meal held in the new dining hall, which was filled to overflowing. We were called to make pledges to retire the debt on the building. David and Linda Frost, music evangelists, provided entertainment.

A report on the Recreation Ministry in 2000 showed more than 100 groups not affiliated with First Baptist utilizing the RMC's facility during that year, including Heartstrides, which met four mornings a week for several years until they moved to the Carolina Regional Heart Center in 2000. Members of any church organization may use the facility for meetings, weddings, reunions, etc., and areas of the building may be rented to other groups. Originally volunteers worked the control desk and the Center was open up to 55½ hours a week. More requests for use of the building were made than there was time available. Even with this demand on time for the building, the RMC has been underutilized



in the evenings. Originally open Monday through Saturday, the Center began closing on Saturdays in September 1995 and soon started closing on Friday nights. Beginning January 2002, the evening hours were cut back from 9 p.m. to 8 p.m. on Monday, Tuesday, and Thursday. The building currently closes at 7 p.m.

Each year the Recreation Committee hosts a banquet for Control Desk volunteers, most of whom are church members, and presents a Volunteer of the Year Award to one who has worked over and above the call of duty. Most volunteers work two to three hours a day, one or two days a month. Past winners were Elizabeth Reaves (1993, 1994), Irene Clodfelter and Maxine Teague (co-volunteers 1995), Tess Ellington (1996, 1997), and Johnny Clapp (1998, 1999), Wilbur Stancil (2000), and Jeanne Cooke (2001).

With the RMC looking shiny and new, the time came to refresh the look of the older part of the church. The windows in the sanctuary were replaced Thanksgiving week 1993 and plantation shutters replaced the drapes in the sanctuary in 1995. The vestibule was remodeled in September 1996. All the windows in the oldest part of the church and the Educational Building were replaced during 1997-98. A gate was installed at the driveway on Main Street to be opened for members on Sunday. Those members, guests, and parking space renters using the parking lot would enter off Church Street. For several months tokens were available at the Control Desk for guests and members to pick up as they left the building so they would not have to pay to leave the parking lot. The payment gate was taken down in 2000 but spaces are still rented to those who need them. The Main Street driveway was closed permanently during the 2002 Faith Journey renovation.

Some members of our congregation had difficulty hearing the sermons clearly. Thanks to a donation in 1997 in memory of members Mr. and Mrs. Eugene Proffitt, Sr., a modern assistive listening system was installed for those with a hearing disability. An earpiece running from a small receiver picks up the sound so all could equally enjoy the services. Members who so desired could purchase their own personal receiver.

Thoughts then turned to the courtyard on Main Street. During the days of the Day Care Center, the area had been used as a playground and many in the church wanted to see it as a playground again. Other members wanted a columbarium erected. A columbarium is a structure of vaults lined with recesses for funeral urns. In November 1999 the church decided to build a play area, but these plans were put on hold when overall renovation plans were made in 2000.



On Saturday, March 25, 2000, over 100 members of the church gathered in an informal all day meeting to discuss the concerns of the church—what needed to be done spiritually, physically, and structurally. This discussion became our “Faith Journey.” Among other ideas, we expressed the need for renovation of several parts of the church, specifically the sanctuary and the area between the sanctuary and the RMC, the sections built in 1912 and 1929.

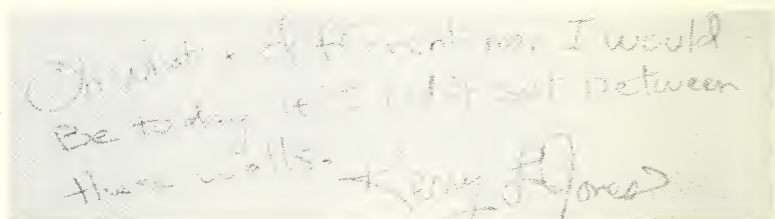
In May of that year, Trinity Architectural Firm in Winston-Salem was hired to conduct a preliminary assessment of the renovation needs. They found, most notably, that the children’s Sunday School classrooms on the top floors were not in accordance with the current building code which states that children under a certain age must have immediate access to an outside door in case of emergency. The overall result of the study was that the oldest parts of the church need to be gutted and re-built. The children’s classrooms would be moved into the former lower auditorium area, the office area would move, a Youth Center could be designed in the building at the corner of Church and N. Elm streets, which, at that time, housed the Golden B Restaurant and Small Luxuries Jewelry store, and Sunday School classrooms would be added and designed in the area. New restrooms would be added behind the sanctuary on all floors.

In the sanctuary, new paint and carpet would be installed, pew seats would be cushioned, the pulpit platform would be extended with steps leading up, as well as a handicapped lift added. Construction on the sanctuary began in early October 2001. On September 23 and 30, Dr. William Slater asked anyone who so desired to write some “Holy Graffiti” on the walls with pencils, making note of what the sanctuary has meant to them. These messages would become sealed into the sanctuary during the repainting.

Many of the messages were related to the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center in New York City and the Pentagon. Some of the thoughts were:

- Love God, Thank The Lord.*
- This is where my husband was baptized. Thank you, dear Lord.*
- For God’s works will endure forever.*
- We met in the church choir, married in this sanctuary, two of our daughters married here—been married for 58 years.*
- Over the years these walls have heard prayers, laughs, tears, and thanks. We may change the color of the walls, but the purpose of these walls will never change.*

- Thanks for providing us a place to worship. Thanks to the Holy Spirit who transcends buildings.
  - Less of me, Lord, more of you.
  - Jesus saves!
  - To God be the glory, great things He has done.
  - Church Rules!
  - Thanks for all you've done for us. I love you.
  - If you are on fire for Jesus, people will come to watch you burn.
  - I love God.
  - May God bless this church and his people forever.
  - God is good.
  - Church is Holy!
  - Be happy in the name of the Lord.
  - PUSH - Pray until something happens.
  - Thank you God for such a wonderful place to worship you! This is a holy place. I gave my life to you here, was baptized and married here! I look forward to all the days ahead.
  - “I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.”
- Philippians 4:13*
- (inside outlines of hands) The hands of the future.
  - “The Lord is my strength and my shield; my heart trusted in him, and I am helped: therefore my heart greatly rejoiceth; and with my song will I praise him.” *Psaln 28:7*
  - This church has been the backbone of my life for 65 years.
  - These walls hold a purpose and it will hold them always.



*Sealed within the remodeled sanctuary is some of our love for First Baptist*

Sept. 30, 2001 would be the last Sunday we would worship in the sanctuary for approximately four months while it was being renovated. There was no sermon. The first hymn sung that day was the first hymn sung on the dedication day of that sanctuary on July 13, 1941. Members

gave testimonies and histories and visions for the future. At the end, a candlelight service was held. The entire congregation in attendance, including the nursery babies, took their candles out to the front steps and sang the *Doxology*. We took our light into the world.

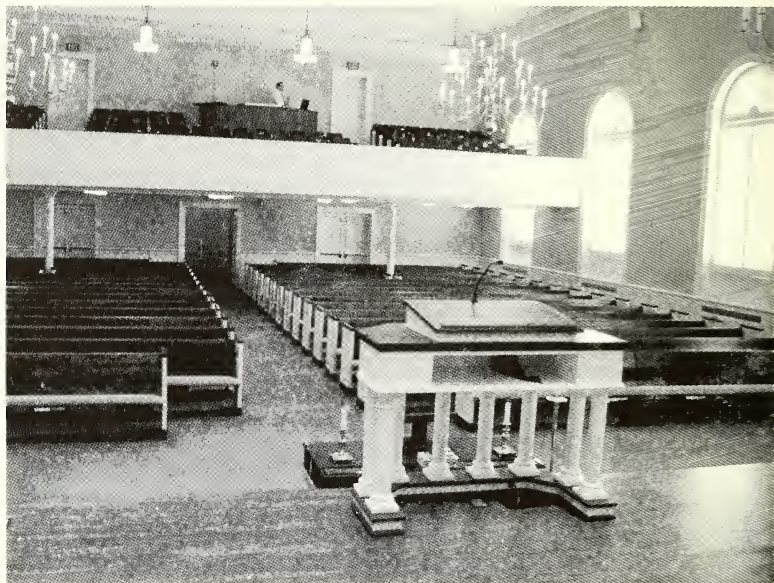


*Sanctuary after 2001 renovation.*

The sanctuary remodeling began October 1, 2001, just two weeks after terrorists attacked the Pentagon and destroyed the World Trade Center in New York City. Our country was planning retaliation strategy. In light of the times, long time church member Virginia Smith wrote these words: "December 7, 1941 (the attack on Pearl Harbor), stands out in my memory in several ways, but in one involving our sanctuary especially. Our sanctuary was new, it was near Christmastime, and our choir was presenting its Christmas musical program. The church was beautifully decorated; there was an atmosphere of calm, serenity, reverence, and worship. Then, after an hour of enjoyment, we went through the doors to the outside to harsh reality. Our country was at war. What a contrast,

just by going through a door.” As we prepared to remodel the sanctuary just two months shy of fifty years after the sanctuary was built, our country was preparing to go to war again, with Afghanistan.

As the sanctuary was being remodeled, the congregation was able to enjoy a different atmosphere of worship as we met Sunday mornings in the gymnasium. The gym was filled most weeks and extra chairs were brought in. Since we could not sit in our regular places in the sanctuary, many people enjoyed moving around the gym and meeting new people. Plans to return to the sanctuary on December 1 were delayed until January 27, 2002.



*Renovated sanctuary*



# MINISTERS/STAFF

## PASTORS

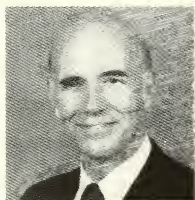
In 1971 Rev. James Pharr resigned to go to a church in Ocala, Florida after seven years in High Point. Rev. Pharr and his wife, Pat, had six children, Jimmy, Mary, Elaine, Emily, Stephen, and Philip.

During the interim, Central Baptist Associational Missionaries Rev. J. D. Harrod and Rev. Jim Pope alternated supplying the pulpit.



*Rev. James Pharr*

Dr. Alfred L. Miller was called in 1973 from Camden, S. C. He had served churches in North and South Carolina and Florida. His interests included conducting clinics and conferences. In 1974 the church approved his serving in an evangelistic crusade in Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe) with other personnel appointed by the Foreign Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention. He and his wife, Sandra, had two children, Donna and Steven. Dr. Miller resigned in 1979 to accept a call from First Baptist, Mount Airy, North Carolina.



*Dr. Alfred Miller*

Interim minister was Dr. Carlton Prickett.

Pulpit Committee members asked to search for a new pastor included Allen Campbell, Bobbie Hodgins, Susan Howard, Garland Ledford, Patsy Miller, and Bernie Sheffield.

Dr. L. Lamar King was called in 1980 from First Baptist, Duncan, South Carolina. He has the distinction of having served as minister for the longest period in our history, moving in 1994 to First Baptist, Charleston, South Carolina. Dr. King loved history and was instrumental in locating the cornerstone of the sanctuary as well as helping in plans for



*Dr. Lamar King*

the "Heritage" pastor. Dr. King inaugurated the yearly Heritage Day observances. He and his wife, Corinne, had two children, Connie and Chris.

Dr. King had several goals in mind when he came. He wanted the church to grow and wanted to get the name First Baptist Church out in front of people. Another goal was to provide the best staff possible for service to the church. Once the community was aware of First Baptist

and once the staff was in place, the next goal was to provide an inviting place for worship. He feels that the result, the Recreation Ministries Center, is one of the most rewarding accomplishments of his entire ministry.

Dr. Hoke Coon was the next interim minister.

Prior to hiring a new minister, the Pastor Search Committee asked the congregation to complete a pastoral profile survey to help them in determining the type of minister the church needed. A few of the qualities were: age of 30 - 50; have completed formal ministerial training or higher; marital status was not critical but, if married, must have a strong marriage; must be a strong preacher, teacher, counselor, visitor, and administrator.

The Pastor Search Committee thought that the person who best fit the needs of the church was Dr. R. Alton Cadenhead, called in 1995 from The Hill Baptist Church in Augusta, Georgia. Dr. Cadenhead was the author of four books and while at First Baptist, contributed a weekly column to the *High Point Enterprise*. He is a certified Marriage and Family Therapist and counselor. He and his wife, Suzanne, have two children, Chris and Melody. Chris is also a minister, currently at Mt. Gilead.



Dr. Al Cadenhead

Dr. Cadenhead came to First Baptist at a time he called a "transition period," following a pastor who had been with us a long time. He felt one of the main needs of the church was a long range plan, which was accomplished. He helped the church develop a plan and retire an old debt. He was instrumental in showing the need for renovation of the church building. Mostly, in retrospect, Dr. Cadenhead believes that his time in High Point was to prepare the church for the leadership and ministry which was to come.

Dr. Cadenhead left to become senior minister at Providence Baptist Church in Charlotte on May 31, 1998. He says his "best memories of First Baptist High Point are of the people. Far more than buildings and programs I remember the wonderful, loving people. They received me and my family and loved us. The congregation made the Cadenheads feel like they belonged. Many of these relationships will go with me all my days. The good people of First Baptist will forever be the church's best asset. Even if those years might best be characterized as transitional, they will always be one of God's good gifts to me."

Dr. Dale Steele was the next interim minister.

Again, prior to hiring a new minister, a survey of the members was conducted. This time the congregation wanted:

- *A gifted teacher who enables persons to learn and understand deep spiritual truth.*

- *A person who emphasizes evangelism and the importance of individual lifestyle witnessing.*

- *A person with deep concern for those who have never made a profession of faith.*

- *A person who is an effective communicator of well-prepared sermons.*

- *A person who is active in reaching new families in the community.*

- *A person who has compassion for all the church and community who are hurting.*

- *A person who understands how to work with diverse people.*

- *A person who seeks scriptural applications to resolve life problems.*

- *A person who enjoys study of Scripture and application to current lifestyles.*

- *A person who provides multiple entry points into the congregation's ministries.*

All of this culminated with the calling of Dr. William A. Slater in July 1999 from Marion Baptist Church, Marion, Virginia. Dr. Slater is very family oriented and enjoys traveling. He and his wife, Kathy, have two children, Kelly and Paige. He earned a Master of Divinity from Southern Baptist Theological Seminary and a Doctor of Ministry from Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary. He has done continuing education at Union Theological Seminary and Princeton and has had Clinical Pastoral Education at the Medical College of Virginia. He has participated in the National Coordinating Council of the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship and was Vice President of the Virginia Baptist Pastors Conference. He has been on the Board of Trustees of Virginia Intermont College and the University of Richmond.



*Dr. William Slater*

Since coming to First Baptist, Dr. Slater has participated in Operation Inasmuch, and traveled with a mission team from the church to Honduras in the summer of 2000.

Dr. Slater has been described as being very gifted in preaching and pastoral ministry, is a "people person," and has a heart for outreach. He is able to balance pastoral and preaching ministries. In an interview with the *High Point Enterprise*, May 18, 1999, just after his calling, he

said, "I think there's a potential in that church located in downtown reaching out to the High Point community. I'm looking forward to being in a church where people want to celebrate a relationship with each other and with Jesus Christ....I think the strength of that church is its people. The human resources in that church are pretty awesome. Its witness and its presence in that community are a vital one. I'm looking forward to building that and being a part of it....My primary passion and vision is to have a place where people can find a sense of community and a sense of family. I want to create a place where friends are family, and family are friends...where relationships between people and God are the main things that we're creating....I want us to continue to reach out to people in that larger community—not limited to the boundaries of High Point city, but to that region. I want them to live out what, for me, is the joy of a life that is lived in the full spirit of Jesus Christ."

In 2000 Dr. Slater began a series of sermons entitled "The Seed Initiative—Sowing the Seeds of God's Love." The focus was planting the seed of God in the world. It might take a while to see results, but the ability to plant a seed is in all of us. We must sow like Christ, love like Christ, grow like Christ, and live like Christ.

## CURRENT MINISTERIAL STAFF

### REV. BEN VOGLER

Rev. Vogler joined First Baptist as Minister of Youth and Recreation in February 2001. He graduated from Mars Hill College with emphasis on music and recreation and from Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary in Wake Forest, North Carolina with a Master of Divinity degree. He is a published musician and has served as minister of music, youth, and college at previous churches. He comes to us from Johns Creek Baptist, Alpharetta, Georgia where he was Minister of Youth, following an eight year association with First Baptist, Greensboro.



*Rev. Ben Vogler*

He hopes the Youth "become mission minded...seeing the need in others even before themselves. In doing so, I feel that we will grow, because this, helping others, is ingrained in us from God. It is in there wanting to get out...all it needs sometimes is a little push. Seeing other youth helping out and having fun with it will draw other youth in. Once they are in...we have a chance at presenting the Gospel."



## REV. BRUCE HARTGROVE

Rev. Hartgrove has the distinction of being our longest serving staff member. He was called in 1981 after serving as Minister of Music and Youth at Locust Grove Baptist Church in Smyrna, Georgia. He earned a Master of Church Music degree from Southern Baptist Theological Seminary.

Hartgrove is a member of The American Choral Directors Association, The American Guild of English Handbell Ringers, The Hymn Society of America, Choristers Guild, Music Educators National Conference, Southern Baptist Church Music Conference, Greater High Point Ministerial Alliance, and the North Carolina Baptist Singers. In 1985-86 he was listed in *The Official Register of Outstanding Americans, Special Edition of Southern Baptist Leaders*, and in *Who's Who in Religion* in 1992-93.



Rev. Bruce Hartgrove

Throughout his career with First Baptist, he has served in local, state, and regional offices for choir, music, and handbell groups and on committees for the North Carolina Baptist Church Music Department. Through the last decade he served on the faculty of the Children's Choir Camp at the North Carolina Baptist Assembly at Caswell and on the faculty for Music Week also at Caswell, both sponsored by the North Carolina Baptist State Convention Music Department. He is trained as a State Specialist in Handbells for the State Convention. In 1991, he participated in a mission trip to Sao Paulo, Brazil, with the North Carolina Baptist Singers. He conducted the Virginia Baptist Handbell Festival in 1995 and 1997, the Triad Handbell Festival in 1997, and the North Carolina Baptist Youth Statewide Handbell Festival in 1999.

One of Hartgrove's personal goals is to teach children in the handbell choir to read music. Noting that in the last decade, music and cultural arts have declined in the public schools, Hartgrove said the church is one place where children can develop a talent given them by God.

Since his coming, Rev. Hartgrove has increased the number of choirs.

"The congregation is the largest choir in the church," Hartgrove said in quoting one of his seminary professors who stated, "Congregational singing is a barometer of a church's health." He added that the congregation of First Baptist sings a variety of music, all to the glory of God.

One of Hartgrove's first duties in 1981 was to employ an organist for the church. He enlisted Mike Hill who served until December 2000, holding the position of organist the longest of any person in church history. Hartgrove said Hill's talent and dedication made the musical program

of First Baptist exceptional.

While here, Rev. Hartgrove has graciously supervised the Radiant Club of senior adults, leading them on outings and even a trip to the Passion Play in Oberammergau, Germany in 2000.

He was surprised on September 12, 1993 when the Adult Choir and the Adult Handbell Choir secretly commissioned an anthem, "The Heavens Are Singing," in his honor for 12 years of service and friendship. The choirs rehearsed while he was on vacation and at First Presbyterian Church after he returned to be ready to include the anthem into the Sunday Service without his knowledge.

In recognition of his 20 years of service, Rev. Hartgrove was honored at an appreciation reception August 12, 2001, and in gratitude he was granted a sabbatical.

#### REV. STEVE ZIMMERMAN

A new position was established in 1997—Minister of Adult and Childhood Education. We knew that if the church was to grow, attention must be focused on the children's ministry. The Childhood Ministries position had been filled for several years by volunteers and part time staff. Since we had not strictly had a separate Education Minister for several years, the position was not budgeted. We did not begin a search until funds were raised. Rev. Zimmerman was called February 25, 1998 when the budget was secure. His duties are to organize and administer the Adult and Children's education program of the church.



*Rev. Steve  
Zimmerman*

Rev. Zimmerman came to us after serving several years as Minister of Education at First Baptist Church in Shelby. He felt the call to Christian service as a freshman in high school. He later graduated from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas with a Master of Arts in Religious Education.

He felt that his mission was to enable and equip God's children to find ways they can use their spiritual gifts for the Kingdom's glory. His specialty is adult and children's education and outreach with professional experience in developing a comprehensive educational format for the local church.

After coming to First Baptist, Rev. Zimmerman breathed new life into Vacation Bible School, including not only children, but also adults in Bible study. Attendance tripled the first summer he led VBS. He also

introduced a format of adult discipleship on Sunday mornings during the regular Bible study hour. He is a lover of history and aided the Heritage Committee in the planning of the 175th Anniversary in 2000.

Rev. Zimmerman accepted a call effective June 2002 to First Baptist, Mebane, North Carolina as Minister of Education.

## **OTHER STAFF MEMBERS**

Susan Stanley became Organist upon the resignation of Mike Hill in December 2000. Stanley has been assistant organist, pianist, and choir accompanist for several years.

Cheryl Taylor serves as Educational Secretary.

Jo Ann Roumillat serves as Financial Secretary.

Beverly Hunter serves as Recreational Secretary.

Steve Cox serves as Building Supervisor.

Peggy Owens, Church Hostess, retired December 2001 after 18 years and countless meals served. She was honored December 19 after the annual Christmas Buffet.

Doris Hiatt, was recognized in 2001 for 20 years as Assistant Church Hostess. She and Imogene Holland retired in September 2002. Edna Aynor also served the church for a long time.

## OUR MEMBERS

Since the founding of Jamestown Baptist Church, our members have included many of the city's outstanding citizens.

Our congregation currently includes doctors and nurses, lawyers, teachers, law enforcement officers, city employees, ministers, former missionaries, civic leaders, owners of businesses, coaches, and other professions, no profession being too small to contribute to the good of the community.



*Baptism*

At the 100th Anniversary in 1932 First Baptist had 1,187 people on roll. For the 150th Anniversary in 1975 we had 1,500 members. For the 175th Anniversary in 2000, membership was 1,470.

There are many stories to tell. Any record of the activities of our members will surely accidentally omit someone. The stories below represent our members and former members and are not meant to fully illustrate every member.

As part of the 175th Anniversary of the church in 2000, the History Committee decided to find out which families had been members of the church the longest.

One family has the honor of having six generations of continuous membership through consecutive generations at First Baptist. They are the descendants of **A. J. Dodamead**. According to church records, Mr. Dodamead was a member in 1870, followed by his daughter **Laura**, nephew **Thomas**, granddaughter **Faye Dodamead Chambers**, her children **Deborah**, **Beverly**, and **Ray Chambers**, and Ray's children **Ashley** and **Joel**.

Several families have been in the church for five generations. **J. B. Seward** joined in 1921, following his son **Robert Seward**. Then Robert's children **Horace**, **Evelyn**, **Irene**, **Virginia**, and **Mary Ruth**, followed by their children **Judy Seward**, **David** and **Bert Smith**, and **Carol Brooks**, then **Erin**, **Andrew**, **Melissa**, and **Rob Smith**.

**Charles Bennett** joined, followed by his daughter **Olivia Bennett**



**Chastain**, her son **Woody**, his children **Amy** and **Leslie**, and Amy's son **Jackson Kent**.

**Mr. and Mrs. John Gaines Garland** joined, followed by their daughter **Mrs. Thomas Pitt Hardie**, her daughter **Alfreda Stancil**, Alfreda's children **Tommye**, **Galen**, and **Betsy**, and Betsy's children, **Lauren**, **Allison**, and **Ginny Brodd**.

**Emily Jordan Ingram** joined, followed by her son **Eli Kirkman Ingram**, his son **Robert Lee Ingram**, Robert's daughter **Martha Lancaster**, and Martha's daughters **Myra**, **Laura**, and **Alice Ann**.

Several other families have been members of the church for four generations.



*Eva Alexander*

**Eva Alexander**, who passed away in 1996 at the age of 98, was a prolific painter and collector who continued to work into her 90s. October 3, 1994 was declared Eva Alexander Day by the Mayor of High Point in honor of her many civic activities. She was a member of *Who's Who of American Women*.



*Dr. Blackwell*

**Dr. Michael Blackwell** has been president of the Baptist Children's Home of North Carolina, Inc. since 1983. The Baptist Children's Home is North Carolina's largest child care institution, with 14 facilities. In 2000, Dr. Blackwell authored *New Millennium Families*, a guide to building a strong family. A new cottage at Mills Home in Thomasville, part of the Baptist Children's Home, was dedicated to him in September 2000. Dr. Blackwell is a member of the board for the North Carolina Partnership for Children and is a recipient of the "Order of the Long Leaf Pine," a statewide honor awarded by the Governor of North Carolina.

**George and Judy Brice** were Southern Baptist missionaries to Brazil for 20 years. Since retiring to High Point, George has continued his ministry as chaplain to the High Point Jail and leading the High Point Jail Ministry, a non-denominational organization offering worship services, adult education, substance abuse programs, job skills, and support groups for inmates which he founded. Judy operates a Christian counseling office.



*Judy and George Brice*

**Irene Brooks** joined the church when she was 10 years old (in 1922) and has been a member ever since. She began playing piano in the Beginner's Department when she was 13 years old and while still with the Beginners, for the Farriss Bible Class which became the Farriss-Andrews Bible Class in honor of T. Wingate Andrews, teacher. For many years her Sunday started on the third floor playing for Adult opening exercises, then moving to the basement to play for the Beginners. Irene was piano accompanist for the Sunday evening services for many years. She joined the church staff in 1961 as Financial Secretary and served for 19 years until she retired in 1980. Over the years she has been a member of the WMU and Radiant Club as well as holding offices in her Sunday School class, the Ideal Class. She is well known as a poem writer for special occasions.

**Pearl Bullard and Frances Quigley** were delegates to the Baptist World Alliance in Stockholm, Sweden in the 1970s.

**Jack and Virginia Cox** have hit the missions road since their retirements in 1985 when they made a promise to make their lives "count more for God and for others." A story in the *Biblical Recorder* in 1998 recounted some of the Cox's work, beginning with the first year of their retirement when, for 31 days, they visited missions in Fairbanks and Anchorage, Alaska. In 2000 they returned to Anchorage where they organized a church library for Calvary Baptist Church of Anchorage. In 1995 they joined volunteers in Prague in the Czech Republic where Virginia worked in the library of the International European Seminary. This facility, which contained over 60,000 volumes, was the largest theological library on the continent. Jack and Virginia have participated in many other volunteer mission activities over the years, between them traveling to South Africa, Russia, Estonia, Ukraine, Switzerland, Brazil, Czech Republic, Germany, and domestically to Charleston, West Virginia; Savannah, Georgia; North Carolina; and Tennessee. While there, they helped with renovations, building, and library preparations and gave out Bibles, food, clothing, medicine, and gifts where needed. Virginia has also been church librarian/media director for 35 years and WMU Director for many years.



Virginia and Jack Cox

In 1984, church member **Bob Culler** was given approval by the church to take courses at Southeastern Seminary in Wake Forest, North Carolina.

**Ray and Kathy Frye** were missionaries to Singapore and Malaysia for 29 years.

**Tony Griffey**, son of Joyce and Raymond Griffey, one of the original children who came as a part of our bus ministry in the 1970s, has become a star tenor with the Metropolitan Opera in New York City. He graduated from Wingate College (attending with assistance from the Lloyd and Georgia Thayer Scholarship Fund established by the Radiant and Fellowship Sunday School classes) and received a Master's Degree from Eastman School of Music in Rochester, New York before receiving a full scholarship to the School of Opera at the Julliard School of Music in New York City, where he took acting and foreign language classes. While there he was a part of the Young Artist Development Program at the Metropolitan Opera. He made his Met operatic debut in "Parsifal" by Wagner in April 14, 1995 with star Placido Domingo, and has played Lennie in "Of Mice and Men." He is an example of being in the right place at the right time when, as understudy to the lead, Tony (now appearing as Anthony Dean Griffey) was called on to take over the lead in "Peter Grimes" on January 5, 1998 for his first lead roll. He was honored to sing at the opening ceremonies of the 1998 Winter Olympics in Nagano, Japan. Still, with all his accomplishments, Tony returns home to perform at our church on occasion.

**Woodroe Haywood** has held just about every important position available in the church except minister. He was elected Treasurer in 1958 and still holds that position. According to Dr. Slater, "He knows where every penny is right now." His attention to detail and astuteness in financial matters of the church are lovingly acknowledged by members as he urges them to continue and increase their support of First Baptist. Without question, he could be referred to as a "father figure" of the church, as he has served in so many capacities. He has been a Junior as well as Senior Deacon, member of Personnel,



*Woodroe  
Haywood*

Building, Pastor Search, Finance, Constitution, and Denominational Relation committees, to name a few, and chairing many of these. Woodroe was honored October 7, 1970 for his 18 years as superintendent of the Sunday School. Included in Rev. Pharr's remarks were: "This man has a willingness to give as much time and talent to his church as any man I have ever known. I have never heard him complain about having to spend too much time fulfilling his obligations. He knows that it takes hard work and he is willing to work hard at his job." When the discussion

arose whether to sever ties with the Southern Baptist Convention in 2000, Woodroe made it a point of record that he was the person who made the motion to sever ties. He was also honored June 16, 2002, two days before his 90th birthday, recognizing his long years of service. In his sermon that day, Dr. Slater said, "I know why Woodroe is Exhibit A for the difference Jesus Christ makes in one's life....Woodroe is a disciple of long standing because he never has stopped marveling at the love of Jesus Christ and the love of his church here at First Baptist."

**Kerry Jones** was one of the Olympic Torch Bearers during the Torch Run preceding the July 1996 Atlanta Summer Olympics.

**Tom Jarrell** was appointed District Court Judge for District 18 in 1999 by Gov. Jim Hunt.

**Maxine Perdue** was named to North Carolina's "Great 100" nurses in 1992. She was singled out for nursing excellence, commitment to the community, and efforts toward improving the quality of patient care. Her husband, Wayne was recognized in 2001 for being Sunday School director for many years. Prior to serving as Director, he had served as Director of the Youth Department and taught seventh and eighth grade students. He has served as president of the church choir and chairman of the Music, Personnel, and Nominating committees.

**John and Addie Reavis** were elected messengers to the Third Congress Pan-American Union of Baptist Men and/or Laymen's Conference in Niterai, Brazil in 1977 and attended a number of other Baptist World Conferences.

**Helen Sheffield** was honored on October 15, 2000 for over 40 years leading the Preschool Division of Sunday School. She retired in 2000 to enter an adult Sunday School class.

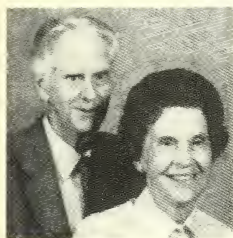
**Red Sykes** celebrated his one hundreth birthday December 10, 2001. (He passed away in 2003.)



*Red Sykes*

**Dr. Lloyd Thayer** had been a teacher of a men's Sunday School class since 1940 before moving to Charlotte in the late 1990s. In 1940, Adult Sunday School classes were much larger than today and there were fewer of them. The average attendance in his Farriss-Andrews Class was 123 men. Dr. Thayer came to High Point in 1939 to be principal of Elm Street Elementary School, which was located on the corner of Elm and Church Streets on what is now the site of the First Baptist Church Youth Ministries Center. Dr. Thayer remembers that at one time he was on 11 of the 13 committees of the church, as well as being on the Board of





*Georgia and Lloyd  
Thayer*

Deacons. Dr. and Mrs. Thayer were both associated with education in High Point for many years. His wife, **Georgia**, was principal of Montlieu Avenue School. In 1978, in honor of the Thayers, the Fellowship and Radiant Sunday School classes set up "The Lloyd and Georgia Thayer Scholarship Fund" at Wingate College in "love and appreciation for Dr. and Mrs. Thayer's unselfish devotion to the City Schools, in giving of their time and talent teaching the Word of God,

and inspiring all who know them to live a little better." Recipients are to be a) persons nominated by First Baptist Church of High Point, and b) preferably persons seeking to prepare themselves for vocations in Christian youth work, the ministry, or Christian education, although the scholarship may be awarded to any worthy and deserving person, regardless of prospective field of study and/or life's work. If the church did not nominate a recipient for two successive years, Wingate officials could nominate a worthy student. On their selection, each recipient is presented a brief biography of Dr. and Mrs. Thayer. Dr. Thayer is a trustee of Wingate College. He says, "For these 60 plus years, I have been near the leadership of First Baptist Church and have been blessed by it all. This church can have its greatest service in the future. If, in any way, I have strengthened its past, I am thankful."

**Betty Underwood** celebrated her 100th birthday March 3, 1998. (She passed away in 2003.)



*Betty Underwood*

**Wesley Warren**, son of Clarice Warren, worked for President Bill Clinton's Environment Advisor in the Council on Environment Quality.

**Betty and Jack Williams** formed the Open Door Shelter Committee at First Baptist in 1988 and served the first meal to the homeless in the old YMCA building on South Main Street. They enlisted the aid of other church members, many of whom have continued to volunteer over the years. The ministry originally planned to furnish food for two meals a month but other churches in the city joined in so First Baptist now only furnishes one meal a month. Betty and Jack have twice received the Open Door Ministries' "Good Samaritan Award" for their work. Their other community work includes Hospice of the Piedmont, of which Jack currently serves as Treasurer.

**Rocky Wright** has not missed attending Sunday School for over 50

years, whether at First Baptist or elsewhere. Special recognition was made on Sunday morning, September 9, 2001, and a special attendance pin was made especially for him.

When **Hazel Young** died February 25, 2000, she was involved in the preparation of this new addition to the history of First Baptist. As a member and former chairman of the History Committee, she was attending planning meetings and gathering material which could tell the story of First Baptist to future generations. Her friends spoke of missions consuming Hazel's time and talents for practically her entire life. In her fifty years at First Baptist, she was Women's Missionary Union President and Director many times. She held many other positions in WMU and was Churchwide Missions Coordinator at the time of her death. She participated



*Hazel Young*

in many retreat and leadership training sessions at Ridgecrest and Caraway Baptist Assemblies. For many years she taught the women's Keystone Bible Class in Sunday School. She rarely missed a summer teaching the Bible or mission story in Vacation Bible School. She also organized the "Nightingales," a group of women who still sing for the homebound and in rest homes. In 1980 she went on the church's first mission trip to Milton, West Virginia. She organized a group of women in 1988 to learn to make Chrismon ornaments for the traditional Christmas tree which is placed in the sanctuary each year. The Vietnamese Mission of the church was a special love of Hazel and her husband, **Dennis**. For a number of years she taught English to the Vietnamese and enlisted other members of the church to help. At her funeral, Rev. Paul Cao, pastor of the mission, assisted Dr. Slater and many members of the Vietnamese congregation attended.

Once a choir member, always a choir member, it seems. **Margaret Osteen** has been a member of church choirs for 63 years. She remembers that the First Baptist Church Intermediate Choir sang for the first Easter Sunrise Service at Floral Garden Park Cemetery in 1939. Her husband, **Arnold**, along with **Neal and Martha Lancaster**, have been choir members for 55 years; **Nancy Brock Westmoreland** for 53 years; **Louise Short** and **Mabel Clark** for 50 years.

Several of our members and former members have gone on to Christian service.

**Donald Brock**, son of Nancy Westmoreland and the late Mack Brock,

was ordained in 1978 and received his Doctoral Degree in 1992. He is currently serving as pastor of Gateway Baptist Church in Irmo, South Carolina. He has participated in International Mission Board projects, taking him to Egypt, the Sudan, Jordan, Taiwan, Moldova, and Tanzania. He is a member of the Committee on Committees of the Southern Baptist Convention.

**Chris Cadenhead**, son of former minister Al Cadenhead and his wife Suzanne, was ordained February 22, 1998 and is currently serving as minister at First Baptist Church in Mt. Gilead.

Former interim Minister of Music **Paul Charleton** and his wife **Collis** became missionaries to Brazil.

**Kent Cranford**, son of Fonda Cranford, received his Doctor of Ministry in 1997 from Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary. He is currently serving as Senior Pastor of First Baptist Church, Commerce, Georgia.

Organist **Rick Coffey** resigned in 1970 to further his studies at Union Theological Seminary in New York City.

**Larry Cripps** is a chaplain in the U.S. Navy. He graduated from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth.

**Dallas Dolle** was ordained in 1972 to the ministry of Religious Education.

**Terry Eddinger** is a Professor of Old Testament on the High Point based North Carolina Campus of Houston Graduate School of Theology as well as a chaplain in the U.S. Navy. He holds a Ph.D. from Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville.

**Brooks Godfrey**, son of Byron and Jo Godfrey, graduated with a Master of Arts, Religious Education, from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in December 1994.

**Karen Goodwin Arp** became a missionary to Alaska with husband David.

**Sharon Hodgin Gritz**, daughter of Bobbie Hodgin, was Adjunct Professor of New Testament Greek for six years at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas. Her husband, Paul, is Associate Professor of Church History at the Seminary. She received her Master of Divinity and Doctorate in New Testament degrees from Southwestern. She has served as Baptist Student Union summer missionary to Ecuador and has worked with seminary students in a church planting effort in Mexico. Sharon is a prolific writer, including numerous lessons for Lifeway Christian Resources, study notes for Bible courses, an article in the book *The Role of Women in the Church*, and

articles in the *Baptist Illustrator* and *Virtue* magazines.

**David Haywood**, son of Woodroe and Dorothy June Haywood, works for Lifeway, formerly the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board. His brother, **Paul**, was ordained December 29, 1991. He graduated from Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary and is currently serving as Family Life Minister of First Baptist Church in Kannapolis.

**Ronald Jackson**, son of Billie Jackson and the late Guy Jackson, is National Events Co-ordinator with Lifeway Music Ministries of Lifeway Christian Resources in Nashville, Tennessee. He graduated from New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary and has served as music director for several churches in Alabama and North Carolina.

**Tommie Smith Jackson**, daughter of Nancy Smith and the late Tom Smith, is a Pastoral Psychotherapist at North Carolina Baptist Hospital, Inc. in Lenoir. Prior to that, she had served as Youth Minister at First Baptist Church in Statesville. She received her Master of Divinity from Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary.

**Norman Jameson**, who holds a Master of Divinity degree from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, was ordained October 1999. He left First Baptist about that time to found a new church, New Hope Fellowship Church, a contemporary praise and worship style church.

**Keith Jones**, brother of Kerry Jones, was ordained in January 1977.

**Robert Williard**, son of Neese and Dinie Williard and son-in-law of Nancy Westmoreland, is pastor of Bethany Church in Matthews, which he started in 1987. He graduated from Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary.

**Paul B. Williams**, son of Mary Williams Hartman and the late B.J. Williams, is assistant priest at the Episcopal Church of the Holy Trinity in Manhattan. He graduated from General Theological Seminary in New York City.



# RELIGIOUS AFFILIATIONS

## SOUTHERN BAPTIST CONVENTION

The Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) was founded in 1845 in Augusta, Georgia, twenty years after the founding of First Baptist Church. The only other Baptist Convention, the American Baptist Convention, was planning to send a black couple as missionaries, something the Southern churches opposed.

The new Convention was established to give Baptists a cooperative outlet for mission work and education. Almost all Southern Baptists believe that the Bible is the “divinely inspired, sufficient, certain, and authoritative guide for faith and practice.” (Cooperative Baptist Fellowship of Missouri website, 1998)

The SBC is the largest protestant denomination in the world, with 15.8 million members and more than 40,000 churches in the U.S. There are about 5,000 home missionaries in the U.S., Canada, Guam, and The Caribbean and over 4,000 missionaries in 126 nations of the world.

What is now called LifeWay Christian Resources (formerly the Sunday School Board) is the world’s largest publisher of religious materials.

The SBC is the sponsor of six Southern Baptist seminaries: New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary in Wake Forest, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Kansas City, and Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary in the San Francisco area.

The Cooperative Program began in 1925 to encourage Baptists to give to Baptist causes and to pay off SBC convention debts.

The goal in the 1970s was the “Bold Mission Thrust,” a project to see that every person on earth had heard of Christ by the year 2000. According to Dr. Lamar King, “this goal was sidetracked and eventually forgotten” in the ensuing takeover of the Convention.

In the late 1970s, controversy began growing over the direction being taken by the leadership of the Southern Baptist Convention. According to Dr. King, “Prior to 1979, conservative was the only label you ever heard anyone use when referring to a Southern Baptist” (*High Point Enterprise* Letter to the Editor, 1990). Dr. King said that a

“conservative movement began with an emphasis on uniformity in Biblical interpretation. The conservative movement emphasized literal interpretations of all parts of the Bible and inerrancy, a word which suggested that the Bible contained no errors or contradictions.” By 1979, conservatism took on a new meaning—strict theology, strict Biblical adherence. People who had been called conservative or fundamentalist gathered enough support to take over leadership of the Convention. They insisted on a narrow interpretation of the Bible as a test of faith on theological orthodoxy. In the fundamentalist belief, diversity of Biblical interpretation is wrong. This belief goes against the original principles of the Southern Baptist Convention, which called for cooperation on missions and educational instruction from Baptist churches with varying theological beliefs. The fact that diverse churches could cooperate on one plan was the basis for the success of the SBC.

With the takeover by conservatives, many heads of committees, schools, and organizations within the SBC were asked to resign or were fired because their beliefs did not reflect the agenda of the new leadership. Many denominational agencies were eliminated to focus more resources on the church planting efforts of domestic and international mission boards. More mission authority would then be passed on to state Baptist conventions, although the concept of assuming primary responsibility for developing and funding mission strategies within individual states, and thus avoiding duplication, had actually been adopted in 1959.

The new SBC sought to promote oneness of belief rather than recognize the unique contributions of individuals, groups, and programs. Many churches became concerned about this new direction. Dr. King expressed opposition several times. In the *Church Herald* of June 4, 1985, he stated that “our convention was organized to do missions (home and foreign), education (of clergy in our seminaries), and publication (we have the largest publishing house, the Sunday School Board, in the world). We have always done this work by cooperation, and we have cooperated in spite of the fact that we are very different and very diverse. Even within a local church there is difference in theological perspectives. We have cooperated with open minds and open Bibles, believing strongly in soul competency. Soul competency simply means that God, through the work of the Holy Spirit, makes every soul competent to know and understand some measure of gospel truth. None of us know everything, but each of us is capable of knowing enough to be saved without being too dependent on another human being.”

In a sermon on August 31, 1986, Dr. King stated that “we have always

been a people who have focused on three Fundamentals of Faith, and these have blessed us and made us strong. In truth, we are all 'fundamentalists' in the sense that we have had basic, fundamental principles which have been dearer to us than life itself. Yes, Baptists in history have suffered and even died for these three fundamentals. They are 1) a person, 2) a presence, and 3) a passion....There is nothing wrong with giving attention to theologies and issues and problems as long as they do not dominate time and attention or become the church's focus. For we are not saved by a theology but a person. We are not judged by our polity, or our leadership within the church, but by our commitment to Jesus Christ....We are a Spirit-led and Spirit-filled people, and we become angry when others begin saying: 'Let us be led by my creed or my theology.' We are a people whose only leader in matters of faith is the Lord Himself who has promised to lead us into deeper and deeper truth."

Four basic freedoms traditionally define the Baptist faith: Bible freedom, soul freedom, church freedom, and religious freedom. According to Dr. King, "two very powerful 'understandings' were laid down as the basis of our fellowship with the SBC: 1) autonomy of the local church which means that power in our convention flows not from a hierarchy of Baptist leaders to local churches but from local churches to our elected leadership and 2) The Priesthood of Believers as Competent Souls which means that every Baptist is FREE to read the Bible and obey it as each understands it. Every Baptist is equally responsible before God for his obedience or lack of it." (*Church Herald*, May 5, 1992)

In January 1990, the church voted not to sponsor the Bailey Smith Crusade coming to the area in June. Mr. Smith was one of the leaders of the fundamentalist SBC takeover and a former president of the SBC. The Central Baptist Association also declined to sponsor the Crusade.

According to a motion presented in the Church Business Meeting on December 12, 1991, the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board was controlled by fundamentalist trustees who had made several irresponsible decisions. "One decision was to defund the \$365,000 contribution Southern Baptists promised to make to the Baptist Seminary at R  schlikon (Switzerland). We (the SBFMB) have been contributing 45% of the total operating budget to this international seminary. The Foreign Mission Board trustees took this action because they did not approve of a professor from Southern Seminary who would be teaching at R  schlikon during a 3-month sabbatical. They thought him too liberal. The professor, Dr. Glenn Hinson, had taught in our church.

“This defunding of the Rüsçhlikon seminary has been condemned by numerous Southern Baptists and by almost all European Baptists. The seminary in Rüsçhlikon educates a great majority of European pastors from all communist bloc countries as well as Germany, France, Spain, and England. Withdrawing the \$365,000 in support will literally close the seminary down unless Baptist churches and groups designate it. North Carolina Baptists voted to send \$30,000 in support. Virginia Baptists are sending \$100,000.

“Our Denominational Relations committee, chaired by Woodroe Haywood, met and discussed the matter.” A motion was recommended, then amended by the Deacons to read: “That First Baptist Church send all UNDESIGNATED GIFTS to the Lottie Moon Christmas offering according to the recommendation of the Denominational Relations Committee (75% to Rüsçhlikon and 25% to all other foreign missions work) BUT THAT OUR PEOPLE BE PERMITTED (and encouraged) to DESIGNATE their offering in any way they choose. Examples of designated offerings: (1) All may go to foreign missions work through the Foreign Mission Board, (2) All may be sent to Rüsçhlikon. The offering may be designated on the envelope, by telephone to the financial secretary, or by letter or note to the financial office. The church will carefully abide by the donors designation, and final distribution ‘totals’ will be reported to the congregation. Gifts and designations will be kept in extreme confidence.”

In the early 1990s we formed our own Ad Hoc Committee on Denominational Relations to: 1) study events and changes in our denomination (association, state convention, and Southern Baptist Convention) as they affect our congregation and its historic commitment to Baptist principles and polity; 2) to meet if and when necessary and to make reports to the deacons and the congregation regarding events and changes in our denomination; 3) to hold meetings in open session where all members of the congregation are free to attend; and 4) to make recommendations to the deacons and congregation.

During the business meeting on October 21, 1992, one member questioned whether, after passing a recommendation from the Missions Committee, we were setting in motion the process towards the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship and away from the Southern Baptist Convention.

In 1997 the SBC called for a boycott of the Walt Disney Co. and its ABC-TV subsidiary to protest Disney’s “gay-friendly policies” and “anti-Christian and anti-family direction.” Many churches went along with the boycott but First Baptist never officially took a stand. Rev. Jim



Baucom of Emerywood Baptist Church in High Point said in the *High Point Enterprise* on June 19, 1997 that the convention doesn't have the authority to force churches to comply with the boycott. "Each Baptist church is autonomous. What the convention says does not speak for us. The convention has no authority on the church." Our own financial secretary, JoAnn Roumillat, said in the same article that there were more pressing issues than boycotting Disney. "There are hungry and needy people, and we need to turn our focus on those things."

At the June 1998 SBC meeting, the Convention passed a resolution reading, "A wife is to submit graciously to the servant leadership of her husband, even as the church willingly submits to the headship of Christ," based on Ephesians 5:22-23 which reads, "Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord, for the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body" (*King James Version*). Most people understood this to mean that husbands should be dominant in a marriage, an issue that stirred up much controversy. Our Minister of Adult and Childhood Education, Steve Zimmerman said that he likes to hide in June during the convention and come back out in July, after the controversy has settled. "Inevitably instead of trying to do something positive, be proactive, it ends up being somehow we shoot ourselves in the foot" (*High Point Enterprise*, June 12, 1998). He sees the "submit" statement as being a negative instead of a supportive statement for marriage.

Outward appearances to the contrary, position statements from the SBC in 1999 state that it believes in the priesthood of believers; that each person is accountable before God—soul competency; in missions and the Cooperative Program; a division of church and state; that women are equal to men in the priesthood of believers but should not be pastors; that creeds are not acceptable but that confessions of faith are; in sexuality and the sanctity of life and condemnation of homosexuality; and that the local church is autonomous, free to determine its own membership and to set its own course under Jesus' leadership.

As a result of these and other decisions by the "new" SBC, many churches that had been supportive of the Southern Baptist Convention began rethinking their allegiance. The issue came to a head at the June 2000 meeting when the Convention adopted a revised version of the popular Baptist Faith and Message (BF&M), first written in 1925 and last updated in 1963. The intent was to clarify some of the items in the BF&M and to update it for today's needs. Some of the changes were: to remove a statement that said Jesus Christ was "the criterion by which

the Bible is to be interpreted” because, as being a part of the Bible, Jesus cannot be separated from it; to declare that only men are qualified to be pastors as is clear in the Bible; to remove the doctrine of the priesthood of the believer from the text; and to address issues of abortion, homosexuality, euthanasia, and deviant and pagan sexuality.

Many individual churches took the stand that the Convention spoke only for the Convention, that local churches were not bound to follow those issues advocated by the Convention. In other words, local churches were autonomous. The SBC, on the other hand, took the stand that individual churches must follow the doctrines of the Convention.

“We are Christians first and Baptists second,” said Dr. William Slater in the *Church Herald* of July 31, 2000. “We are members of First Baptist Church first and members of the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship second. Having kept that in perspective, it still matters what kind of Baptists we are and who we choose to associate with.”

From its beginning, FBC has supported the beliefs and programs of the SBC while declaring itself moderate, not fundamental, but in August 2000 First Baptist Church took a bold stand and overwhelmingly voted to withdraw from the Southern Baptist Convention after a motion was made by Woodroe Haywood. As Dr. Slater said in the *Church Herald* of July 31, 2000, “On the one hand, this is an historic vote. It follows two decades of the Southern Baptist Convention increasingly by degrees moving further and further away from its historic roots and principles. As a church we have watched this steady departure with sadness, and at times righteous anger. The final straw for us and many other SBC churches across the land was the adoption of the Revised Baptist Faith and Message at this year’s SBC meeting. More than ever, it is a dramatic step towards creedalism that is attempting on a national level to determine what a local church’s beliefs are to be. Some of its statements fly in the face of what Baptists at their best have always championed and held dear. It is time to finally say we can no longer feel right about belonging to a denomination whose beliefs run so counter to our own.

“How will this affect First Baptist Church of High Point? Quite frankly, I can’t think of one single way this will affect us. It merely formalizes what has been in practice for years now.”

Many other Baptists in High Point criticized us for withdrawing, but it was not perceived as a major event in the life of FBC. We were just officially stating what we had believed for months. We had not sent money to the Convention since 1991, instead providing financial support to the new Cooperative Baptist Fellowship. “We haven’t left the

Southern Baptists; they've left us," Dr. Slater said in an interview with a local newspaper on August 1, 2000.

The church constitution was amended to delete affiliation with the SBC.

"Many denominations have official creeds that prescribe what their members must believe and do. North Carolina Baptists do not. However, North Carolina Baptists do share certain beliefs and values that bind us together. Recent actions of the Southern Baptist Convention have generated understandable confusion and even criticism about Baptists' beliefs from within the public. As Baptist pastors (who speak for ourselves and not for our churches), we publish the following declarations, which we believe reflect the faith and practice of the vast majority of North Carolina Baptists:

-We believe the Bible is inspired by God and faithfully bears witness to Jesus Christ and His timeless message of mercy, forgiveness, and hope for humanity. We believe the Bible reveals God's nature and purpose and, therefore, serves as our guide for faith and practice.

*We reject any effort to elevate the written word above the Living Word, Jesus Christ.*

- We believe God speaks through Scripture and to each generation; and, therefore, we trust God's Spirit to guide individuals and churches as they read and interpret the Bible. We also believe every congregation is free and responsible to God for its beliefs and practices.

*We reject human creeds and denominational structures that seek to coerce, conform, and constrain belief or practice.*

-We believe God works through all persons, male and female, made in God's image.

*We reject practices and statements that subjugate women and diminish their contribution and role within families or in communities of faith.*

-We believe Jesus modeled humility and service in His leadership style. We consider pastors and ministerial staff to be servant leaders following His example.

*We reject the practice of clergy as autocratic rulers within a local church or the denomination.*

-We believe Jesus' life, death, and resurrection stand as the decisive events in human history.

*We enthusiastically, yet respectfully, invite others to experience*

*the forgiveness and new life that Jesus alone offers.”*  
(*Biblical Recorder*, November 4, 2000, signed by Dr. Bill Slater  
and eighty-five other North Carolina ministers)

At this writing, the current overall belief is that the Southern Baptist Convention is coming apart. More and more Baptist churches are leaving the Convention and others who have stayed in the Convention have withdrawn financial support. Membership continues to grow in the remaining SBC churches. The SBC still has the country's largest home and foreign mission boards and still supports six seminaries. However, withdrawal of financial support by several large state conventions has threatened the future of several seminaries.

## **COOPERATIVE BAPTIST FELLOWSHIP**

The Cooperative Baptist Fellowship (CBF) was organized in May 1991 as a “fellowship of Baptist Christians committed to a world vision of the Gospel” and as a missions and ministry alternative to the conservative dominated Southern Baptist Convention. Organizers felt dissatisfied with the SBC and felt that it was becoming too fundamentalist and that many churches felt the need to be more moderate and flexible.

The mission of CBF is “to bring together Baptists who desire to call out God’s gifts in each person in order that the Gospel of Jesus Christ will be spread throughout the world in glad obedience to the Great Commission.” CBF is “committed to the preservation and propagation of individual and historic Baptist freedoms and distinctives, including the priesthood of all believers, the acceptance of the authority of the Bible without the aid of creeds, the autonomy of each church, and the separation of church and state in the interests of religious liberty” (from Article II of the CBF Constitution adopted May 1993). It is supported by individuals and congregations, including First Baptist of High Point. As of this writing it has grown to about 1,800 moderate Baptist churches who are focusing on improving fellowship, missions, leadership within the denomination, and empowering individuals with the priesthood of the believer—that individuals do not need an intermediary to speak to God.

CBF is employing as missionaries some of those who were released by the SBC Foreign Mission Board and is planning to start a CBF seminary in the future.

Currently, CBF is under fire from some of its own members about



becoming too strict about membership requirements and beliefs, notably the discrimination against gays and lesbians—policies against hiring gays or funding organizations that “condone, advocate, or affirm homosexual practice” (*Biblical Recorder*, Sept. 1, 2001). This does not, however, exclude homosexuals from CBF membership.

Jo Ellen Godfrey of First Baptist was elected to the CBF North Carolina Coordinating Council in March 1996 and has been the National CBF representative from North Carolina for several years. Rev. Chris Cadenhead, son of former minister Dr. Al Cadenhead, is also on the Council.

CBF is attractive to us because, like the origins of First Baptist, it is mission oriented.

## **BAPTIST STATE CONVENTION OF NORTH CAROLINA**

The Baptist State Convention of North Carolina (BSC) was founded in 1830, five years after the founding of First Baptist Church. J. A. Bivens, great grandfather of Betsy Bivens Hines, was one of the founding members and was honored with life membership.

“Baptists existed in the state some 101 years before the first BSC. This is an important point. For much of our heritage and ‘the way we do things’ was already well set before the Convention ever began. But our annual conventions...have obviously placed their mark on Baptist life. These meetings have in a large degree molded us into who Baptists are today” (*Biblical Recorder*, October 25, 1980).

When Thomas Meredith convinced the old North Carolina Baptist Benevolent Society to transform themselves into a State Convention in 1830, the purpose was “to see Baptist churches in places where they are not; and to see all come under the superintendence of a faithful and successful ministry” (*ibid.*). Meredith and the new Convention were successful in establishing new churches, ministries, all under an organization to which no church was under obligation to absolutely follow the principles. Churches now work together to do things which are too large for one single church to accomplish.

Within the first ten years of the BSC, the convention established churches, Wake Forest College (originally Bible Literacy Institution), missions, and a denominational newspaper, the *Biblical Recorder*, billed as a Journal of the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina, founded in 1833.

Life in the BSC has not been without dissension. Since its beginnings, churches have not agreed, but, according to the October 25, 1980 *Biblical Recorder*, in its 150th Anniversary of the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina Edition, that diversity of opinion and freedom is the strength of the BSC. There was early opposition to the Convention and to the education of ministers at Wake Forest.

During the Civil War, the Convention went on record opposing the attack by the United States against the Confederate States while wishing to aid Southern independence. The Convention supplied Bibles to North Carolina Confederate troops and helped the children of wounded or dead soldiers. Home missions were disrupted by the war but missionaries were still able to work on the religious instruction of slaves with the blessings of their masters.

After the War, the care of orphans became a major concern and women's missionary societies began to play a large part in the Convention. Funds were collected to aid the Oxford Orphan Asylum (begun as the Masonic Orphanage by John Mills), now called Mills Home, a part of the Baptist Children's Homes of North Carolina. In 1877 the Central Committee of the Women's Missionary Society was organized by the Convention, after much debate. Some argued that the whole church should work together, not just women or men.

In 1899 the Baptist Female University opened in Raleigh, later changing its name to Meredith College in honor of BSC founder Thomas Meredith.

Between 1910 and 1919 North Carolina Baptists launched a \$1 million fundraising project for Convention causes at the same time the SBC began a \$75 million campaign, asking North Carolina Baptists to raise \$6 million. The two campaigns raised \$5 million over the next five years.

Dissension was still growing. With the founding of the Southern Baptist Convention's Cooperative Program in the 1920s, many churches felt they were losing their say in financial matters. Under the plan, the state Convention would collect funds from individual churches then send part of the funds to the SBC. After discussion, the result was a Unified or Cooperative Program in the state where churches could decide where their contributions should go. In the late 1990s this plan changed to a Cooperative Missions Giving plan whereby churches had the option of contributing through four different plans.

Arguments sprang up about Charles Darwin's theory of evolution, contrary to the Biblical account in Genesis.

In 1921, Dr. M. L. Kesler, who had been minister at First Baptist in

1896 and 1897, became head of a committee to consider building a SBC sponsored hospital in Winston-Salem. Over the years, North Carolina Baptist Hospital has grown to be one of the leading hospitals in the country.

In the 1930s and 1940s, North Carolina Baptists sponsored 44 North Carolina missionaries to foreign countries.

In the 1950s, the subject of desegregation came before the Convention which voted to allow its individual schools to decide their own integration policy. Again, SBC members could not agree on this issue.

By the 1950s, there were several colleges (Wake Forest College, Southern Seminary, Meredith College, Campbell College, Chowan College, and Fruitland Baptist Bible Institute), one hospital, two orphanages, two homes for the aging, and a foundation, all supported by the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina. When Wake Forest College moved to Winston-Salem in 1956, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary moved into the old facilities in the town of Wake Forest. (In 1979 the Convention allowed Wake Forest University to have more control over its board of trustees and began giving the University less financial support.)

“Who ‘owns’ a Baptist church was a question that left the church and went to court in 1953. The North Carolina Supreme Court ruled against the traditional Baptist system of local church autonomy in the case of North Rocky Mount Church. The pastor of the church...thought the Southern Baptist Convention was heretical. One August Sunday morning he read to his church a resolution calling for immediate severance of all denominational ties.

“The majority of the congregation voted and passed the resolution. But three members of the minority sued for the recovery of church property. The State Supreme Court ruled that the ‘true congregation’ of the church is the one accepting doctrines and practices of the church prior to the dispute”. (*Biblical Recorder*, Oct. 25, 1980)

In 1957 the issue was dancing. The Convention voted their disapproval of dancing at Baptist institutions.

In 1963 the Convention voted 517 to 362 to go on record to abolish capital punishment.

North Carolina Baptists made history when, on August 9, 1964 in Durham, Addie Davis was ordained as the first female minister in the history of the Southern Baptist Convention.

In the 1970s, many Baptist churches did not believe in immersion and many in the Convention felt that those churches should be banned from

Convention participation. However, others argued it was against Baptist belief that no one organization should dictate the rules for local churches.

For many years, people have argued that our Convention should subscribe to the policies of the Southern Baptist Convention. They feared that the SBC would reject us if we didn't follow their rules. "Every year at the annual meeting of the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina, somebody wants to change the budget, or change some state-developed policy to conform to the SBC's policy. Those who would affirm the state's right to support missions as it sees fit, or to grant to the local church the privilege of supporting Baptist work as it sees fit, are often branded as 'disloyal' Baptists. But they are not. They are just 'Baptists.'

"While the national convention has sought to 'franchise' agencies and institutions and thus 'disenfranchise' those who don't follow the corporate policy, the state convention of North Carolina has sought to do just the opposite. Its elected leaders and its staff have sought to include everybody that wants to be included. The budget gives options, recognizing the diversity of our people and wanting everybody to be included.

"A Baptist State Convention stands as a tribute to the 'inverse pyramid.' Authority and policy derives not from the few, but from the many. State conventions, including our own, predate the Southern Baptist Convention and may well outlive it. If that is so, it will be because we have chosen to continue to follow the course established not by national policy which we simply rubber-stamp, but by creative work by the churches or our state in cooperation for the larger goals of our state convention and in creative cooperation with others with whom we share the larger vision of missions and ministry in the name of Jesus" (*Friends of Missions* newsletter, October 1993).

By the late 1990s the Convention contributed to ministerial schools at Campbell University, Gardner-Webb College/University, Wake Forest, Duke University, and Baptist Theological Seminary in Richmond, Virginia.

At the November 2000 Convention, the 1.2 million member BSC of North Carolina reaffirmed its commitment to the SBC while reaffirming autonomy and keeping its own mission plans. It also voted to sever most of its remaining ties with Wake Forest University, founded by the Convention in 1834.



## MAINSTREAM BAPTISTS

Related to the takeover by conservatives/fundamentalists of the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC), and the subsequent formation of the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship, is the formation of Mainstream Baptists of North Carolina (MBNC) in 2000.

Mainstream Baptists was formed by Baptists in North Carolina who are “committed to reaching people for Christ, advocating historic Baptist principles, and preserving the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina and its related institutions” (Mainstream Baptist newsletter, September 2001). It is guided by four values: the centrality of Christ, the voluntary nature of religion, the priority of the State Convention, and the spirit of cooperation. At least nine other states have formed a similar organization based on a movement which began in Texas. It is not an official convention but a loose, voluntary network.

According to Mainstream Baptists, recently the North Carolina Baptist State Convention (BSC) has moved from a shared leadership group to a political action group. The BSC has become fundamentalist, similar to the SBC. MBNC believes in the separation of church and state. Their goal is to put “the BSC first before all other allegiances or loyalties” (Mainstream Baptist newsletter, September 2001).

Many Baptists in the state feel that recent changes to the SBC’s Baptist Faith and Message are threatening the beliefs of traditional Baptist freedoms and that the BSC is vulnerable to takeover by the same style of fundamentalist believers who began taking over the SBC in the 1980s.

According to David Currie, Director of Texas Baptists Committed, a similar organization, “Mainstream Baptists do what they do because of Jesus, desiring to preserve the authentic Jesus. Fundamentalist Christians emphasize rules and technicalities about issues such as gender, resulting in a legalistic gospel more like the law of Moses than the gospel of grace through Jesus” Recent changes to the Baptist Faith and Message Statement had the effect of putting the law of Moses on the same level as Jesus (*Biblical Recorder*, Nov. 17, 2000).

Mainstream Baptists believe that the new 2000 Baptist Faith and Message Statement is a perversion of the Gospel. They believe that Conservatives believe that the Bible is the literal, infallible Word of God and the only authority on Jesus. Moderates and Mainstream Baptists, on the other hand, say that such a belief elevates the Bible over Christ, that followers believe the Bible word for word as written, rather than

focusing on the life of Christ and His teachings. They follow the 1963 BF&M and believe in religious freedom.

“Mainstream Baptists also do what they do because of the Bible,” Currie said. “All we believe is based on scripture,” he said. “Those who insist on a single interpretation of scripture lock the Bible into the time in which it was written.”

“Every change in the BF&M has to do with your freedom to interpret scripture for yourself,” he said.

“Mainstream Baptists do what they do because they believe in freedom,” Currie said. Baptists have always stood on Jesus and the scripture as two pillars of truth that work together and are sufficient, he said. “When you add anything else to it, you stop being a Baptist and become a creedalist” (*Biblical Recorder*, Nov. 17, 2000).

The priesthood of believers, i.e., not having to go through an intermediary to reach God, is at the basis of Mainstream Baptists.

Mainstream Baptists urge each church to support and send mission funds to the national organization they choose, whether SBC or not.

State Mainstream Baptists met in January 2001 to choose leaders and to set a \$100,000 fundraising goal.

Scott Frady of Calypso, North Carolina, gave his interpretation of Mainstream Baptists in the *Biblical Recorder* March 3, 2001: “Those of us embracing the Mainstream idea are people who have recognized the futility of the last two decades and are ready for God to do something new in our day. We have become fully aware that it is not who wins or loses that is important but who is faithful. Our opposition is to fundamentalism.

“The Mainstream movement is looking for free and faithful men and women who embrace the ideas put forward by our Baptist ancestors and also embrace the cross of Christ. We are people looking beyond labels to persons, beyond causes to principles and beyond control and manipulation to clarity of thought and strong self-definition. No one in this movement is out to get anyone, but we are out to protect those things which we deeply value such as our historic Baptist identity, our faith stances and the right for each person and church to express their faith as God leads.

“We are a people who have determined what we value and have determined what is and is not worth fighting for. The health and witness of North Carolina Baptists are worth fighting for. We are willing to sacrifice in order to reach people for Christ and to preserve a strong Baptist witness here in this state. We have our differences but we are united in one Lord, one faith and one baptism. We are not moderates. We are Christians and we are Baptists.”

As of this writing, First Baptist has not sanctioned Mainstream Baptists, but Jo Godfrey from First Baptist is on the steering committee and church members have attended organizational meetings. Godfrey and others interested in MBNC are also active in the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship which is not associated with MBNC.

## **CENTRAL TRIAD BAPTIST ASSOCIATION**

After having been members of Liberty and Piedmont Associations, First Baptist Church has been a member of the Central Baptist Association since 1963. The name changed to Central Triad Baptist Association (CBTA) in 2000. As of March 2001, there were thirty-three churches in this local association.

The mission of the CTBA "is a network of churches caring for one another and partnering to obey the Great Commission. Strategic objectives for church development, evangelism, ministry, church starts, mission partnerships, prayer, and mission support have been developed to accomplish the mission of CTBA" (CBTA website, March 2001).

According to Dr. King, our church became involved in a controversy that arose within the CBTA in 1993. Associational Missionary J. D. Harrod was forced to resign by a group of fundamentalists in the Association, led by three local pastors. These men later resigned from their churches and the controversy was over.

## FAITH JOURNEY

On Saturday, March 25, 2000, over 100 members of the church gathered in an informal all day meeting to discuss the concerns of the church—what needed to be done spiritually, physically, and structurally. Among other ideas, we expressed the need for mentoring programs for members, youth, and the Vietnamese; developing a successor leadership plan; identifying and growing teaching teachers; providing more Bible study opportunities; providing for weekend study retreats; encouraging Bible study for all ages; and using breakout Sunday School classes to feed spiritual growth and the needs of the congregation.



The result of that meeting was a planning map for the church called "*Faith Journey*."

A steering committee consisting of Dr. Bill Slater, Dr. Peter Schoch, Wayne Chambers, Barbara Hunnicutt, Ron Stroup, Betty Coggin, Kathleen Nix, Jennie Counts, Mike Hedrick, and David Williams studied the results of March 25, identified the steps to achieve the goals, determined the priorities, and organized them into four goals, each with its own list of needs. Committees were then formed to fulfill the goals with one staff member as head of each committee.

After the vote for Faith Journey was passed, the carillon in the steeple spontaneously began ringing. The sound brought goosebumps to Building Superintendent Steve Cox who raced to the courtyard to learn if the sound was really from the carillon. The reason for the excitement? The carillon had been broken for several months! Cox wondered if this was a sign from God.

The first goal of Faith Journey was called *Seeking His Will*, under the leadership of Minister of Music Bruce Hartgrove. The objective was to "align ourselves with God's Purpose for our Church by developing a relationship with God through Prayer, Spiritual Growth, and



Stewardship.” Key actions included creating structured prayer opportunities; publishing praises, needs, and requests; having prayer and praise services; organizing and encouraging creative Bible study; having weekend retreats; discovering our spiritual gifts; allowing God’s Spirit to lead worship; building faith by building our personal relationship with God; and inviting participation in stewardship.

The second goal was *Learning His Way*, under the leadership of Minister of Adult and Childhood Education Steve Zimmerman. Its objective was to establish a defined process for knowing God’s purpose and way by understanding the Word through education and Christian development. Key actions included facilitating Christian growth through education (new member training, singles classes, life courses, college classes, children’s church, transitional stages, and family education), training (through mentoring programs and training for teachers, leaders, deacons, and staff), and service (through mentoring and deacon/music activities).

The third goal was *Sharing His Love*, under the leadership of Dr. Bill Slater. Its goal was to reach people for Christ through inreach, outreach, and public relations. Key actions included increasing the use of the Recreation Ministries Center and Dining Room for outreach; establishing a First Baptist website; creating an identity for First Baptist; developing brochures for Outreach and Newcomers; contacting newcomers and prospects; targeting groups for outreach; looking into alternative worship opportunities; consistently visiting homebound; continuing mission work and Operation Inasmuch; looking into after school and day care opportunities; establishing a staff position for intergeneration singles; establishing a non-member Bible study and programs; sponsoring business luncheons; and having Deacons review their Family Ministry program for effectiveness.

The final goal of Faith Journey, and perhaps the most ambitious and costly, was *Preparing His House*, led by Dr. Slater. The objective was to create an inviting and appropriate worship environment by retrofitting existing facilities and grounds to fit future needs. Key actions include defining the possibilities of the existing structure; understanding present class needs; determining outreach goals; studying demographics; remodeling the building and making improvements, especially in the children’s area and the oldest part of the church; addressing parking needs and studying the revenue from the parking lot; and establishing a children’s play area. Trinity Architecture of Winston-Salem offered preliminary plans which were presented in December 2000

and in January 2001, we voted to proceed with the program and have more defined plans drawn up. We began a capital fund raising campaign in spring 2001 for the estimated \$2,570,000 remodeling/renovation project.

On Sunday, March 25, 2001, we observed Commitment Sunday with a special Sunday School and worship service when pledges were made to the campaign. The initial amount pledged was \$1,505,856, with a significant amount coming from the Vietnamese Church which worships in our building. The amount exceeded our goals which were an initial Challenge goal of \$1 million, a Celebration goal of \$1.25 million, and a Faith goal of \$1.5 million.

Several activities accompanied the Faith Journey effort. Leading up to Commitment Sunday, we observed Forty Days of Prayer February 14 through March 25 to pray for the pledge day. Dr. Slater emphasized that "the place to start is prayer."

A special theme chorus for Faith Journey was sung most Sundays at the beginning of the campaign. The lyrics said, "Go forth in his name, proclaiming Jesus reigns. Now is the time for the church to arise and proclaim Him Jesus, Savior, Redeemer, and Lord."

Grades 1 through 6 had a contest to create a poster for the Faith Journey Building campaign.

LIFE classes started in January for spiritual growth.

Men's Bible study began meeting Tuesday mornings.

Outreach opportunities included working with High Point University students, monthly alternative worship services with "Changed Heart," offering the Lord's Supper regularly to the homebound, and a Valentine's Banquet for members and guests.

Faith Journey is an ongoing project. It has no target completion date. Remodeling of the sanctuary, a part of Faith Journey, began in October 2001 and was completed January 2002. The building at the corner of Church and Elm Streets was converted into a Youth Ministries Center and was dedicated in April 2002.

## SUMMARY

With a church as old as First Baptist, we have celebrated many events connected with our founding and history. The earliest celebration of which we have found record was when the Church celebrated its 100th anniversary on October 30 and 31, 1932. This date was the anniversary of when the church split over a disagreement between missions and anti-missions groups. Former pastors Dr. O. L. Powers, Dr. Rufus Weaver, and Rev. James A. Clarke preached and a condensed history was read by the author, A. E. Tate. A two-week revival followed.

We have not been able to locate information about the 125th anniversary of the church.

In 1970 the Church History Committee was authorized to begin making plans for First Baptist's 150th anniversary to be celebrated in 1975. The date of the 150th celebration on Sunday, May 4, 1975 was based on the actual founding date of the church in Jamestown, after we left Abbott's Creek Church and before the mission controversy. It was celebrated for the year leading up to May 4 to reinforce our founding with a time of remembrance and fellowship. Dr. Theodore Adams, then visiting professor of preaching at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary at Wake Forest and past president of the Baptist World Alliance, was guest speaker on Sunday morning. All former members and guests were invited to attend the service and the reception held that Sunday afternoon. Church member Irene Brooks wrote the words to the Anniversary Hymn, set to the tune "Hymn to Joy":

*Come, let's stand before our Maker,  
Let our hearts with love proclaim,  
Thanking God for all his mercies,  
Gratefully praise his glorious name.*

*With his help a group of Christians  
Formed a church long years ago,  
Founded on the Lord's great promise,  
They with faith did grow and grow.*

*Through the years they had their trials,  
Many disappointments, too,  
But the Lord was right beside them,  
Guiding all their journey through.*

*Now our year of celebration  
Fills our hearts with joy and pride.  
Glorious things are in our future,  
We have faith he's by our side!*

In 1984 the city of High Point was 125 years old and First Baptist Church had been a part of High Point for the entire time. The church joined with the city for the anniversary and activities took place all year. One highlight of the year was the unveiling on Heritage Day, May 20, 1984, of an historical marker placed in front of the church by church member Mary Tinsley to tell our heritage to all who pass. Mrs. Tinsley donated the marker as a memorial tribute to her father, Clay Harris Clinard.

The Women's Missionary Union compiled a history of their organization in 1986 on the 100th anniversary of the founding of WMU.

Our church has worshiped with the mother church, Abbott's Creek, in joint services as well as worshiping in Jamestown in 1986 at the site we believe to be where the original Jamestown Church was located in 1825. Jamestown historian Ben Farmer gave members a glimpse of history of the time period.

The Heritage Room was established in 1991 to house and display, in one central location, the archives of the church. It is open to everyone interested in the history of the church. An inventory of all items in the Heritage Room was compiled in 1994 and is constantly updated when new items are added. Included in the Heritage Room is the actual 1832 document separating our church from the original church in Jamestown. The room is maintained by the History Committee. The Committee often fields queries about former ministers, members, and history, as well as oversees the acquisition of new items for the Heritage Room by members wanting to downsize their household or from heirs of members who find church memorabilia as they are looking after family estates.



*Historical Marker*





*Jack Cox uses a metal detector to search for cornerstone of sanctuary*

Church Historian Carol Brooks was made a church officer in 1993.

When the current sanctuary was built in 1942, a cornerstone was placed but there was no record of exactly where it was placed and members who were there at the time now could not recall the location. In 1993, with the diligence of several members using metal detectors, the cornerstone was found in the northeast stairwell along Main Street at the side entrance. The contents were removed and are on display in the Heritage Room. A plaque marks the original location.

Memorial Hall was established November 1997 outside the Heritage Room on the hall leading to the Nursery. It included new memorials as well as markers removed from other parts of the building for one reason or another (for instance, the plaque from the church pipe organ 1941-1975), memorials from old windows in the sanctuary, a memorial to member Maxine Teague given by Meta Best, the painting of the church given by the Vietnamese congregation, and other memorials. The Hall was merged into the Heritage Room in 2003.

The Vietnamese Church began meeting in our building in 1990 and in 1998 celebrated their eighth anniversary by joining the regular congregation in a service that included music by the



*Dr. King pries out the cornerstone box*

Vietnamese, a baptism service, as well as a sermon preached by Dr. Al Cadenhead and interpreted by Rev. Paul Cao into Vietnamese.

On Wednesday, April 10, 1996, at our monthly conference, the following Mission Statement was formally adopted: *"We are a fellowship of believers in God with a gathering place in downtown High Point. We believe in Jesus Christ as the Son of God, the perfect expression of God, that He lived among us, died on the cross for the forgiveness of our sins, was raised from the dead that we might have eternal life, and will return to judge the living and dead. We believe in the authority of the Bible and will seek to apply its truths to our lives. We believe in the priesthood of believers, the universal body of Christ, and in the autonomy of the local Church. Our mission field has no borders. By the power and leading of the Holy Spirit, we are committed to share the Gospel of Christ through worship, education, prayer, ministries, missions, and recreation. We perceive ourselves as a Christian family, nurturing one another, and making that gift of family available to others. We are committed to growth in spirit, knowledge, and strength."*

In 1997 we issued Mission 2000, our goals for the future. Committee members Howard Counts, Clarence Herndon, John Hunnicutt, Clif Kelley, Martha Lancaster, and John Rhodenhiser established the following six goals that we planned to have in place by the year 2000.

- Family Ministry: encourage, strengthen, and minister to families within the First Baptist Church family by having more church family activities, more interaction within the Deacon Family Ministry Plan, and other plans.
- Christian Education: increase the effectiveness of our Bible teaching ministry by providing a seminary trained minister for leadership (which led to the hiring of Rev. Steve Zimmerman), by increasing the number of Sunday School classes and enrollment, by exploring the possibilities of expanding Bible study to non-traditional times and places, and other plans.
- Stewardship: increase our effectiveness as a church by growth in financial stewardship, part of which was to increase our financial support as a church by 8% per year.
- Outreach and Growth: grow in membership for the purpose of being more effective ministers in our service to the community. We planned to increase our visibility in the community, develop worship alternatives to attract unchurched people, focus on Children's and Singles' ministries, and other plans.
- Mission Support and Evangelism: increase the interest of our congregation in mission support by providing more opportunities for "hands on" mission efforts both locally and regionally, and other plans.

- Spirituality: develop a better awareness of the spiritual realm of our faith by better education, awareness, opportunities for sharing, and learning how to experience God.



*Current Church Bus*

We voted to purchase a used bus from Southeastern Eye Center on Wednesday, March 4, 1998 at a cost of \$35,000 to replace the old church bus then in service. The bus had a rest room, galley, wheelchair lift, and televisions, but only seated 20. The galley has been removed and more seats added. The bus cost \$130,000 new. We also have two smaller vans.

Regular church business meetings, or conferences, were changed from monthly to quarterly in November 2000. Church conferences are now held on two Sundays and two Wednesdays in the year.

The theme of the 175th anniversary of the church was “celebrating our heritage of faith with a mission for tomorrow.” To build up the excitement of the big day, we celebrated with several different events for a year leading up to the Labor Day Sunday, September 3,

2000, grand celebration. During the year, coffee mugs, commemorative plates, and Christmas ornaments with the anniversary logo were available to members. Vacation Bible School 1999 recognized the fact that



*175th Anniversary Logo*



First Baptist Church has been a part of the High Point community for 150 years. The year kicked off with a very entertaining sermon by Dr. James Dunn, Executive Director of the Baptist Joint Commission on Public Affairs in Washington, D.C., who set the tone of the upcoming anniversary. On Civic Day, March 12, 2000, community and civic leaders were invited and recognized and then invited to a covered dish lunch to meet the members. The greatest highlight of the build-up year was Old Fashioned Day on May 7, 2000. Former minister Dr. Alfred



*Betsy Hines and Bruce Hartgrove*



*The Gospel Bard featuring Steve Zimmerman's solo and Josh Hartgrove on guitar*

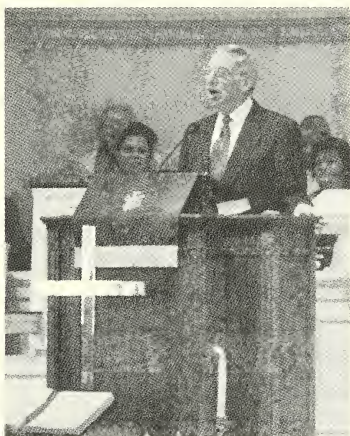


*Senior Citizens Appreciation Day*



Miller and current minister Dr. William Slater, all decked out in swallowtail coats and hats, arrived at the church in a horse drawn wagon to be greeted in the parking lot by the entire congregation, many of whom dressed in period clothing. The choir presented "The Gospel Bard," a musical history of gospel music in June 2000. Senior adults were recognized during morning worship August 6 when all members 85 years of age were invited to attend. Christmas 2000 came early for First Baptist Church when our annual concert was presented December 3, featuring the choir and special guest, former member and current Metropolitan Opera tenor Anthony Dean Griffey.

The sanctuary was full that Labor Day Sunday 2000 morning to hear High Point Mayor Arnold Koonce declare September 3, 2000 as First Baptist Church Day in High Point. All former ministers, staff, and members were invited to return for the event. Dr. Randall Lolley, former president of Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, was guest speaker, while former minister Dr. Lamar King and former Abbott's Creek minister Rev. Roy Cantrell contributed. A special anthem had been commissioned and written by Anna Laura Page and the choir gave the debut performance. Many families who have been in the church for generations were recognized with the Dodamead/Chambers family having been members the longest—for seven generations. Being Baptists, of course, a covered dish lunch followed the service with so many people attending that the dining room was filled and even Dr. Lolley had to eat on the ping pong table in the lobby! Everyone loved the chance to meet and greet old friends and stayed for several hours after lunch.



*Dr. Randall Lolley*

What will the 200th anniversary mean to First Baptist Church? Will it still be a downtown church? Will it be a growing church? Will it still be the friendly church people say it is? Will it remember its heritage? We hope so. After all, there is a lot of faith behind it to build on.

As this update to the history of First Baptist Church comes to a close, many exciting plans are in the works for the church. (See Faith Journey

chapter.) As a result of the March 2000 Faith Journey meeting, architects have drawn up renovation plans and renovation has been completed in the sanctuary area. In August 2001 Dr. Slater encouraged an emphasis on prayer as a part of Faith Journey with month-long topics and emphasis on prayer with the theme "Fill, Flow, Focus." He urged the congregation to make the following prayer covenant-Filled: to be filled with God and emptied of myself. Less of me, more of God. Flow: To let my life flow where God is already leading. Focused: To focus on those outside of our fellowship who need Christ.

In 1988, as the church was entering a fundraising campaign for the Recreation Ministries Center, "a Call to Stewardship" was issued. It is still relevant today.

*First Baptist Church has an exciting vision of its future. Our church has decided, after hundreds of hours of committee meetings and deacons meetings and business meetings, that we will continue to be a church that will look to the future. We will make a tangible and very substantial investment to improve and strengthen the First Baptist Church of today. More importantly, we are investing in the First Baptist Church of tomorrow.*

*We have these unique opportunities because the First Baptist Church of yesterday looked ahead. The church of yesterday was a building church, a Spirit-led church, a church that strived again and again to do a better job of reaching and winning souls for Christ.*

*The First Baptist Church of yesterday, today, and tomorrow is the same church. Our faith in God endures—and will endure. Our witness for Christ will always keep us united.*

## ADDENDUM

In January 17, 1971, Church documents show that some 80 black friends attended an afternoon fellowship and evening worship.

In 1971 a dinner at the Top of the Mart started off the 1971 budget campaign with the theme "If You Really Care, Share."

The estate of the late Frank Weedon bequeathed to C. J. Stephenson a sum of money and Mr. Stephenson directed that the money be given to First Baptist. The money was given to the Building and Grounds in memory of Frank Weedon and in honor of C. J. Stephenson.

At this time, Wednesday night supper cost only \$1.00.

In 1979, an Ad Hoc committee to study wedding procedures for the church. The volunteer non-paid committee's duties were to include assisting the minister of the church by directing weddings. Members were to be thoroughly trained in Christian and social procedures for the wedding service. In 1980 First Baptist drew up a set of policies and procedures for weddings held in the church.

In 1996 the policies and procedures were revised and a booklet containing the church's position on the wedding ceremony is given to each couple upon their request to be married in FBC.

The booklet stated that weddings at First Baptist are worship services and that weddings also must be conducted and approved by the pastor of the church.

It is further stated that the buildings of the church are considered "God's House" and all conduct and use of buildings shall reflect the sacred purpose for which these buildings exist. The bride, bridegroom, wedding party, families, and guests are expected to conduct themselves in keeping with the sacredness of God and His house. No smoking is allowed in the church and anyone found using alcoholic beverages at the rehearsal or wedding service will be barred from the service.

A controversial movie, "The Last Temptation of Jesus," was shown in theaters in 1988. Many people all over the country thought the movie was not a proper portrayal of Christ. The Deacons of the church presented a resolution to the church concerning the movie. The resolution was seconded by Nancy Westmoreland and passed by the congregation. Bill Blackley made a motion not to send the resolution to the newspaper as planned and the motion was seconded by Craig Chastain. The motion was defeated. David Perry made a motion to rescind the previous

resolution with a second from Dr. Marvin Slate. The church approved the resending action. Bernie Sheffield made a motion for the resolution to receive further study from the Deacon sub-committee for refinement before being brought back to the congregation the following week for approval. The approved resolution, which was mailed to Martin Twin Theatre and Capri Triple Theatre, read:

“August 18, 1988

Be it resolved that we, the Deacons and members of the congregation of First Baptist Church, 405 North Main Street, express our sincere and deep opposition to any television or theater program or movie that represents our Lord Jesus Christ and His church in any manner that is contrary to the accurate, historical records of His life and ministry in the Bible.

We express serious misgivings about the movie “The Last Temptation of Jesus” and we urge the theaters in our city not to show the film. Though we have not seen the movie, we feel, based on publicity about the film, that it is a gross misrepresentation of any historical truth. We have little objection and are grateful for any theater which contributes to healthy entertainment and builds strong moral values in our community. We wish to commend the theaters of our community for their decision not to show the film “The Last Temptation of Jesus.”

In this age of moral confusion, we believe as never before that Jesus Christ is the answer to mankind’s dilemma. We lift Him up as the Lord of Life and urge all citizens of our community to find abundant life and peace through submission to his Lordship.”

The Chrismon tree first was used in 1988 - ornaments made by the women of the church to symbolize Christ and Biblical themes.

On April 15, 1998, upon the recommendation of the Trustees, the membership of the church established the Endowment Trust of the First Baptist Church. The history of the Trust is as follows:

“Occasionally the First Baptist Church of High Point is offered a donation or bequest with the stipulation that the contributed funds be invested and only the resulting dividends from the investment be used for religious purposes.

“In the past, we have had to either advise the donor to create an endowment fund at a bank or trust company or accept the gift and arrange



a specific endowment fund for the donor. Either of these options are somewhat complicated and potentially costly in that they require a separate trust agreement for each gift. In either case, the income from these funds would normally flow into an FBC Reserve Account that would define the rules of disbursement.

“With the creation of the Endowment Trust of First Baptist Church of High Point, we now have a prearranged group trust fund with provisions for separate accounts; each account with its own separate religious purpose and rules for dividend disbursement. A donor can achieve his/her desire to contribute to FBC and specify that it is for the Endowment Trust, indicating which account within this Trust should receive the donation. There will be several accounts included when the Trust is established and others may be added as needed.

“The details of each account or fund in this Trust, its purpose, funding, disbursement rules, etc., will be reviewed and approved by the Trustees and the membership in church conference.

“The structure of this new Endowment Trust Fund allows FBC, through the Fund’s trustees, to choose an effective investment firm and monitor its performance, and to change investment firms whenever it is deemed desirable.”

## **CHURCH CONSTITUTION**

The first written constitution of First Baptist Church occurred during the pastorate of Dr. Alfred Miller, 1973-79.

In 1995 First Baptist revised the church’s constitution. The preamble states: “We declare and establish this constitution to preserve and to secure the principles of our faith and to govern the body in an orderly manner. This constitution will preserve the liberties of each church member and the freedom of action of this body in its relation to other churches.”

The document sets out ten Articles and the By-Laws, which also contain ten Articles.

Article I of the Constitution states the official name of the church, which is First Baptist Church, of High Point, North Carolina, located at 405 North Main Street, High Point, North Carolina.

Article II states the purpose of the church; Article III the statement of faith; Article IV indicates relationships; Article V is the Church Covenant; Article VI covers membership; Article VII covers meetings; Article VIII lists church officers who include the pastor, Sunday School

Director and assistant, Brotherhood Director, Church Training Director, WMU Director and assistant, Baptist Men's Director and assistant, Church Historian, Homebound Director, Church Treasurer and assistant, Church Clerk and assistant, Precious Life Ministries Director, Children's Home Representative, Media Library Director and assistant, Wedding Director, Associational Representatives, and the Church Council which is made up of some of the same people plus all ministers of the church and the chairmen of the Preschool, Children's, Youth, Building & Grounds, and Recreation committees; Article IX includes licensing a member as acknowledgment of his call to the ministry and encouragement to make preparation for it, ministerial ordination, deacon ordination, affiliation with associations and conventions, financial policy, committees-tenure, and property holding; and Article X covers procedures for amending the constitution.

The By-Laws also contain ten Articles. Article I addresses meetings, including worship services, special services, regular business meetings, called business meetings, cancellation of services, moderator, and quorum; Article II covers baptism and the Lord's Supper; Article III the nomination, election, and duties of deacons; Article IV covers other church officers; Article V covers other staff members; Article VI covers standing committees; Article VII covers special committees; Article VIII covers indemnification of staff and church officers; Article IX covers rules of order; and Article X covers procedures for adopting and amending by-laws.

Copies of the Constitution are available from the church office for review by anyone seeking to learn more about the church organization and the Baptist faith.

The church constitution is under constant scrutiny and is subject to revision as conditions warrant.

## VIETNAMESE CHURCH UPDATE

As this book was being finalized in mid-2003, word was received at the church that former Vietnamese Church members Ut and Duong Nguyen, who in 1991 had been beneficiaries of a donated car to further their studies, wished to set up a scholarship at First Baptist.

Dr. Nguyen, now a cardiologist, and his wife Ut, now a pharmacist, living in Charlottesville, Virginia, wrote:

“Quite a few years have passed since my wife, Ut and I have thought of a way to express our gratitude to the church members in general and to those who were particularly more directly involved in helping us settle during our first days in this country. Time constraint did not allow us to do so until now. The invaluable assistance and support the church, and particularly those of the Youngs, the Lewises, and Mrs. Smith (whose first name I unfortunately do not recall), helped us establish the first crucial steps to get us where we are today. We owe our humble success to them and to the church. While Dennis and Hazel Young and Gene and Evelyn Lewis are no longer here, their spirits remain with us. To keep their generosity and caring lives on, Ut and I would like to contribute \$2,000 each year for the next four years to set up two \$1,000 college scholarships—one in the name of Mr. and Mrs. Young and the other Mr. and Mrs. Lewis.”

Stewardship Committee Chairman Dan Odom replied to the Nguyens that their generosity was greatly appreciated and that the donations would be placed into the designated fund “Youth Assistance Program.”

## **STAFF 1969 - Present**

### **MINISTER**

Rev. James Pharr (1964 - 1971)  
Dr. Carlton S. Prickett, Sr., Interim  
Dr. Alfred L. Miller (1973 - 1979)  
Rev. J. D. Harrod, Co-Interim  
Rev. Jim Pope, Co-Interim  
Dr. L. Lamar King (1980 - 1994)  
Dr. Hoke Coon, Interim  
Dr. R. Alton Cadenhead (1995 - 1998)  
Dr. Dale Steele, Interim  
Dr. William A. Slater (1999 - )

### **MINISTER OF EDUCATION**

Alma Bumgarner  
Andy Anderson  
Frank Smith  
Steve Zimmerman  
Beth Cockman, Intern

Sylvia Carter  
Caroline Cooney  
Frances Quigley (evenings)  
Justin Rawley, Interim  
Mike Hill  
Susan Stanley

### **MINISTER OF MUSIC**

Cliff L. Christian, Jr.  
Jerry Jones  
Dot Rountree  
Gerald Carter  
Jim Hooks, Interim  
Paul Charlton  
Bruce Hartgrove

### **ORGANIST**

Richard Coffey  
William Herndon  
Jerry Jones  
Sandra Chambers

### **MINISTER OF YOUTH**

Jim Bullock  
Clyde Hall  
David Coggins  
Donald Austin  
David Tiller  
Andy Anderson  
Danny Nolen  
Dale Watts  
Frank Smith  
Stan Vaughn  
Wes Hillegas  
Curt Hernandez  
Jason McCargo  
Ben Vogler



**CHURCH  
SECRETARY**

Jackie Roberts  
Carolyn Barker  
Wanda Chastain  
Pam Hager  
Kerin Plank  
Mildred Tatum  
Margaret Auten  
Cheryl Taylor  
Nancy Floyd, Recreation  
Beverly Hunter, Recreation

**FINANCIAL  
SECRETARY**

Irene Brooks  
Janice Woodard  
Betty Orr  
Susan Ingram  
Debby Austin  
Lana Mainor  
Betty Proctor  
JoAnn Roumillat

**LIBRARIAN/MEDIA  
DIRECTOR**

Evelyn Bryden  
Virginia Cox

**TREASURER**

Woodroe Haywood (1958 - )

**CHURCH HOSTESS**

Mary Reid  
Odessa Ledbetter  
Helen Pendry  
Sylvia Beck  
Linda Parker  
Peggy Owens

**HOUSEKEEPING/KITCHEN**

Florence Dunlap  
Eula Knox  
Suzanne Hicks  
Ida Mae Smith  
Doris Hiatt  
Edna Aylor  
Bonnie Adams  
Linda Cheek  
Imogene Holland

**BUILDING  
SUPERVISORS**

W. C. Howard  
Alvin Hancock  
W. H. Rogers  
E. D. Upchurch  
Edgar Robinette  
Ernest Jett  
C. J. Stephenson (19 years)  
Ray Bowers  
Joseph Chambers  
Talmadge Ellington  
Garland Ledford  
Bill Cox  
Tom Floyd  
Steve Cox

## THE FIRST FAMILY



*The bus broke down . . . again!*



*Church bus*



*Caswell repair mission (1980s)*



*Children's choir (1980s)*



*Ideal Sunday School Class (1990s)*

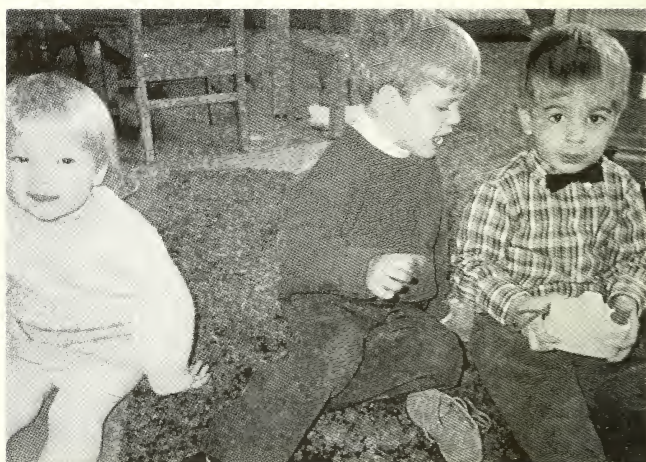


*Future members enjoy ice cream (1983)*





*Nursery (1970s or 1980s)*



*Nursery (1990s)*





*Sally Hartgrove with nursery children (1990s)*



*Dr. Lamar King with van and trailer (1980s)*



*Mission flags fly outside the church*









